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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

INFORMATION IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL PROCESS, 1968

by

Ⓒ Marie Lachmanova

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Information in the Czechoslovak Political Process, 1968

submitted by Marie Lachmanova

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis an attempt is made to show major changes in the functions of the channels of communication and the nature and major effects of information flowing through them on the political process in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The findings show that these channels became the means by which a broad exchange of a great variety of politically relevant information occurred, whereas they had hitherto been used to disseminate "limited" political information. They came to function as a most significant factor in political developments in 1968, which due to previous political experiences and traditions, was proceeding in the direction of developing a pluralistic system.

The opening of the channels of communication to a free expression of unorthodox views and dissemination of a greater range of political information enabled the majority of politically involved population to exert pressures for the establishment of a more democratic political system in Czechoslovakia which was viewed as more in harmony with popular interests as well as with the interests of the country as a whole.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The decision to write a thesis about political communication in Czechoslovakia in 1968 gradually matured over a two-year period. This decision has grown partially from personal experience as a citizen in Czechoslovakia during this period, and partially from the attempt to find an answer to the question, "What were the most important factors contributing to changes in the social and political structure in Czechoslovakia in such a short period of time?" The vast number of existing works on 1968 Czechoslovakia, mostly describing the events, the reform movement as a whole, or its individual important aspects, did not seem to answer this question in terms broad enough to explain at least partially significant and related aspects of developments.

The major argument of this work is that the existing and newly evolving channels of political communication played a significant part in policy-making during the liberal movement in 1968, due to the nature and quantity of information flowing through them. In other words, they made possible a broad exchange of politically relevant information and views, and at the same time they performed a motivating function for politically involved strata of the population, including the leadership. Three major reasons are advanced here as to why the channels of communication were able to play this significant part.

1. One reason is the existence of a stratum of the population, the intellectuals--especially social scientists, economists, historians, lawyers, and writers--who felt they had a particular competence in determining and declaring the reasons for social, economic and political problems in the country. The intellectuals went further and proposed solutions which they felt were more in harmony with conditions in the country and with the interests of the majority of the people than the policies followed up to that time.

2. The second reason was that the population constituted a fertile soil in which these ideas germinated and grew very fast. In other words, intellectuals were formulating ideas which existed, at least latently, in the society. One consequence of the growing awareness of people about their real interests was a flourishing of interest groupings among the population, and these interest groups later became (mainly through the channels of communication) a source of pressure upon decision-making bodies.

3. The third reason was that there was a leadership which on the whole became more responsive to pressures from below, and the majority of its members became receptive to hitherto unorthodox ideas and suggestions about

solutions to the socio-economic and political problems. These members, since they were in a majority in the leadership, created a hope or even a belief in the population that there was a realistic chance for the lawful establishment of such changes in the political system that would considerably increase democracy. This practical aim, which the majority of the population desired, and in which it gradually came to believe, gave a meaning to unorthodox ideas and discussions about relevant political issues. The achievement of this practical aim seemed to be dependent to a great extent on the open-mindedness of the members of the leadership. The relationship between unorthodox ideas of intellectuals and some views and attitudes of some members of the leadership is considered to be relevant for policy and decision-making.

Therefore, the main focus of this thesis is, first, to explore the relevant social conditions in the country in 1948-1968 in relation to the latent political culture; second, to describe the structure of the channels of political communication and their content; and third, to find out the eventual influence of unorthodox ideas, flowing through the channels of communication, particularly upon the opinions of the members of the leadership.

In exploring relevant social conditions, Almond and Verba's concept of political culture,[1] and Huntington's concept of mass political institutions[2] were used as guidelines. In describing the structure of the channels of political communication an attempt was made to secure all significant available data. To find out the nature of the information flowing through the channels, ideas related to the political system and its significant aspects were followed in the press. To find out their eventual influence on policy-making, additional attention was given to some aspects of public opinion and to articles and published speeches of the members of the CP leadership. The intellectuals' unorthodox ideas, and the articles and published speeches of twenty-two of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP were examined to determine how they appeared in the light of the general trend of political development in Czechoslovakia during 1968.

This demanded a certain kind of systematic information, as much as possible in the form of quantitative data. Since the existing literature on Czechoslovakia in 1968 deals only indirectly with political communication, this was not a sufficient source for the purpose of this work. For this reason, the main source of information was not literature about the reform movement but original sources, primarily articles and speeches of prominent intellectuals and members of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee. The following newspapers, magazines and journals served as a source for the relevant information: the CP newspaper Rude Pravo and the other daily newspaper Prace;

the most politically prominent literary magazine, Literarni Listy, and Kulturni Tvorba; the CP bimonthly magazine, Zivot Strany; the monthly political journal Nova Mysl; the monthly journal for youth, MY 68; the students' weekly paper, Student; and three historical monthly journals, Ceskoslovensky Casopis Historicky, Historie a Vojenstvi and Dejiny a Soucanost. Some survey data and information about the background of some members of the leadership were obtained from the archives of Radio Free Europe in Munich.

In addition, there are a few authors whose works were very useful for the examination of some important aspects of the developments from 1948 to 1968, and these works should be mentioned at this point. For the exploration of some politically significant aspects of the background to the year 1968, Barbara Jancar's article "The Great Purges and 'Prague Spring'", helped to determine the major functions of these purges after 1948.[3] In the same sense, Galia Golan's article "Antonin Novotny: The Sources and Nature of his Power",[4] gives a useful amount of information, particularly about Novotny's background. Her second work, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement,[5] is probably the most comprehensive and informative work in English, which sees 1968 events primarily with regard to pressures which had already developed before 1968. She stressed many significant unorthodox ideas usually expressed by intellectuals through the period 1956-1968. Unfortunately, the portion of the book devoted to the year 1968 itself is not very extensive. Jancar's book, Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power,[6] was helpful to this work particularly with regard to her idea of "process of erosion"[7] of monopoly of power in Czechoslovakia in the 1960's.

As to the background of the members of the leadership, Jancar's detailed tables in the above quoted book, were helpful to this thesis, as well as data published in Rude Pravo on April 6, 1968, and data collected by the Archives of Radio Free Europe in Munich. As for other data in this work, for example, data related to the CP membership between 1946-1968, and some economic figures for the same period, a collection of essays written in Czech, (Changes in Systems),[8] was particularly useful.

The main hypothesis of this present work, related to the role of intellectuals and experts in the liberalization movement in 1968, has found some support in most of the works about Czechoslovakia in 1968. However, there are a few studies which paid special attention to this aspect, primarily Vladimir Kusin's work The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring.[9] It is focussed on a description of the appearance of new politically significant ideas and phenomena since 1956. However, in his brief work (about 150 pages) he does not carry out any detailed analysis. A more detailed work related to the political role of writers during the period 1956-1968 is Dusan Hamsik's book, Writers

Against Rulers.[10] Unfortunately, this work is written in the form of memoirs. Much evidence about the role of intellectuals in articulating new ideas can also be found in the above-mentioned books by Golan and Jancar, as well as others. One of the major theoretical assumptions of this work--that there was a link between the unorthodox ideas of intellectuals and the opinions of some members of the CP leadership in 1968--found support in Barnard's article, "Between Opposition and Political Opposition: The Search for Competitive Politics in Czechoslovakia".[11]

One of the major problems of this work has been in dealing with the structure and content of the channels of communications, and their eventual influence on policy-making. The problem can be stated simply as the lack of some kind of widely accepted general "communication approach" with the help of which, first, the communication system in Czechoslovakia in 1968 could be described, and second, the significance of the channels of communication in policy-making during the same period could be explained.

Many people consider human communication as a key to the explanation of social processes. For example, Lucian W. Pye claims that it is possible to analyze all social processes in terms of the structure, content and flow of communication.[12] Richard R. Fagen, translating the Lasswellian paradigm ("Who should be able to say what, in which channels, to whom, for what purposes?")[13] into the "elements of a more general model", states that "every act of human communication involves a source generating a message which travels through a channel to an audience."[14]

However, the literature generally does not suggest any "law" which could be used in an "if-then" sense to explain significant individual social and political phenomena. And more, these general approaches do not specify when we can talk about a certain kind of communication, in our case, political communication. For determining this kind of communication, Fagen's approach seemed to be the most convenient for the purpose of this study: "Communicatory activity is considered political by virtue of the consequences, actual and potential, that it has for the functioning of the political system."[15] Since the opinion of Fagen that "every political system has a different communication system and has different functions everywhere",[16] was also accepted for this study, no concrete classification scheme of political communication of any particular author was used in this work. Instead, a general classification which seems to suit the situation in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was created. Two basic general categories, "formal" and "informal" channels, were employed, primarily to show more clearly the differences in the structure of the channels of communication in 1968 as compared with the pre-1968 period. They are mainly supposed to clarify the major differences in the direction of flow in information. It is assumed for the pre-1968 period that "the most salient characteristic of totalitarianism is the massive amount of communication which flows from the party elite and their agents to the masses. "All human and technological apparatus controlled by the leadership is designed to achieve maximum public coverage and effectiveness", and the "dominant flow is downward."[17] This form of political communication was imposed upon Czechoslovakia in 1948. (With regard to this function it is probably not very relevant how much the "totalitarianism" was moderated in the 1960's or whether we can even use this term at all for this period.) The origin of this approach probably goes back as far as Lenin, who "wielded newspapers as instruments of political leadership and organization."[18] Consequently, it seems that the original function of the channels of communication in a communist country was actually to limit political communications and to create conditions for manipulating people.

In relation to changes of functions of the channels of communication in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Schramm's conception of the functions of the mass media (as the most significant part of the communication system) as "agents of social change, which aid in the transition from old values and relationships to new ones",[19] could be partially used for explanation of these changes. However, this view does not seem to be broad enough to include all functions which the channels of communication performed in 1968. For example, the function of the mass media as "the liberal opposition during the Prague Spring",[20] or "reflection" of latent political tendencies in the population, could fall under this definition only with difficulties.

Alfred Kuhn's distinction between the "information" and "motivation" function seems to be very useful. He states that "communication will be seen as having two possible major functions (purposes), the one to alter a receiver's concepts, which we will construe as the information function, the other to change his preferences or feelings, which we will construe as the motivation function."[21] However, since the "motivation" function can result in various consequences for each individual, it seems desirable to have some criteria for determining when this motivation function can be considered significant. In other words, this very general approach needs an additional amount of specification if one deals with a certain kind of communication. In this case it is necessary to create more concrete criteria to determine the sort of communication with which one deals. For the purpose of this work, which deals with political communication, Fagen's approach (already mentioned), stressing the consequences (actual and potential) for the functioning of the political system, as the criteria for determining the political communication, will be considered as crucial. Besides this, Kuhn's idea of an "information" function will also be considered as relevant in this work.

In sum, it is assumed that political communication in Czechoslovakia in 1968 served to exchange information among various strata of the population, and some information "motivated"--it had significant consequences, including potential ones, for the functioning of the political system. The major interest of this work is in this kind of information, and also in the "ways" it was communicated to the population, including the leadership.

The particular set of circumstances as well as the particular set of social, political, and economic conditions in Czechoslovakia, are considered to a high degree to be unique to that country, and at the same time very important for the appearance of some significant political phenomena in the discussed period. This means that whatever generalizations will be made in this study are made on the basis of a "case study"--a particular set of conditions and phenomena in one country, and can hardly be taken as applicable to other cases. To make some more generally valid conclusions, it would probably be necessary to make a kind of comparative study of a few countries under similar conditions. However, it seems that for the time being "the case of Czechoslovakia", in relation to functions of the channels of political communication, would not be easily comparable with any other country.

FOOTNOTES

[1] G. A. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1963).

[2] S. H. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

[3] B. W. Jancar, "The Great Purges and 'Prague Spring'", Orbis, XV (Summer, 1971), pp. 609-624.

[4] G. Golan, "Antonin Novotny: The Sources and Nature of his Power", Canadian Slavonic Papers, XIV (Autumn, 1973), pp. 421-441.

[5] G. Golan, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

[6] B. W. Jancar, Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971).

[7] Ibid., p. 275.

[8] Systemove Zmeny (Koeln: Index, 1972).

[9] V. Kusin, The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

[10] D. Hamsik, Writers Against Rulers (London: Hutchinson, 1971).

[11] F. M. Barnard, "Between Opposition and Political Opposition: The Search for Competitive Politics in Czechoslovakia", Canadian Journal of Political Science, V (December, 1972), pp. 533-552.

[12] L. W. Pye, Communication and Political Development (New Jersey: Little, Brown and Company, 1963).

[13] R. R. Fagen, Politics and Communication (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 6.

[14] Ibid., p. 17.

[15] Ibid., p. 20.

[16] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[17] Ibid., p. 33.

[18] M. N. Hopkins, Mass Media in the Soviet Union (Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1970), p. 20.

[19] W. L. Schramm, Mass Media and the National Development (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 114.

[20] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, p. 89.

[21] A. Kuhn, The Study of Society (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1963), p. 181.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the issues which are most relevant to changes in the functions and content of political communication in Czechoslovakia during the period from 1948 to 1967. The stress will be on those issues which can be related to the developments in 1968 in the sphere of political communication.

A basic change in the structure, content and functions of political communication occured as a consequence of the establishment of an authoritarian political system in February, 1948. In very general terms, political communication actually ceased to serve to exchange and disseminate information from various sources, but was limited almost exclusively to the flow of "information" from "the party elite and their agents to the masses".[1]

Since the establishment of an authoritarian system in Czechoslovakia was to some degree the consequence of the situation in which the position of the CP played a very significant role, its position in the country after 1945 must be examined. Certain historical factors after 1945 facilitated the process of strengthening the CP in Czechoslovakia. Considering the recent historical experiences with Germany, and the experience with the attitude of Western democratic countries to Czechoslovakia in 1958, it was possible for the Communist Party to fasten in the minds of insufficiently informed people a belief in a number of myths, especially concerning the USSR and the role of the Czechoslovak CP during the World War II. These aspects together with some other factors (e.g., the role of the CP in land reform in 1945-1946) appeared to be the main reason that the CP received strong popular support in the 1946 elections.[2] From 1945 on the CP put forth a program, based on equal cooperation with other political parties in the framework of the National Front. This program stressed democracy and social justice, which was very attractive to certain strata of the population.

It is generally agreed that due to some of the policies of the CP after 1946, expecially one which gradually increased the submission of the CP leaders to pressures from the USSR,[3] it began to lose its popular support already before 1948. Indeed the main reason for the Communist coup taking place in February 1948 was that the new elections were scheduled for May of that year, and there was a high probability that the CP would have lost the popular support it had won in 1946.[4]

The restriction of effective political power to the CP membership after February, 1948 reduced the amount of political participation in the country. However, before this was completely apparent, the illusion was created that the CP would become a broad vehicle for an exchange of views for all who wished to participate in political activity under the changed conditions. The chief qualification under the new conditions appeared to be the acceptance of the idea of building socialism, and the acceptance of an official ideology. Membership in the CP between 1946 and the autumn of 1948 increased from 1,159,164 in 1946 to 2,311,066 in 1948.[5] The majority of the new members came into the Party in 1948. One reason for this rapid increase appeared to be the result of incorporating the other Marxist political party in Czechoslovakia, the Social Democratic Party, into the CP in 1948. The number of Social Democrats entering the CP in 1948 was 114,000; 116,000 came from the National Socialist Party and 25,000 from the People's Party.[6]

However, due to purges, already by the end of 1948 the CP membership began to decrease,[7] and in this light the broadened membership base of the CP can be seen as having a different purpose from that of increasing popular participation. The explanation for this phenomenon can probably be found in Huntington's theory about the role of political institutions in changing societies, i.e., after a major change in a political system, the immediate establishment of political institutions allows for the channeling of increased political participation into legitimate areas, thus preventing violent political activities. The broadened membership basis of the CP was probably supposed to prevent violent resistance on the part of a considerable part of the population which had vested their interests in the previous political system, or were in favour of a democratic political system. People newly entering the CP probably hoped to find either the possibility of influencing policy making through their Party membership or just some kind of security. Using Huntington's terms, after the "revolutionary change"[8] of the leadership, changes in political structure could take a basically non-violent form because the traditional participatory orientation of the population was, partially, channeled for a certain period of time into activity of the Communist Party as the only significant mass political institution after 1948.

However, one part of this membership became at least for some period of time a manipulable mass of people; while another segment became the collective victim of purges which began as early as 1948. In 1954 the CP had 1,489,234 members,[9] a drop of 821,832 from the above cited figure for 1948. In other words, the CP does not seem to have become a platform for confrontation of various opinions and interests.

Previously, Czechoslovak society was characterized by the competition of a plurality of interests, vested mainly in several political parties and organized interest groups, but now it became one in which goals and interests were imposed by one center of power. At the same time the old structure of political communication, with various sources of information and therefore open channels of communication, was broken down. A new one, with channels of communication closed to all important sources of information save one, the CP leadership, was established, and it no longer served the "exchange of information". Rather, it served the purpose of transmitting orders and instructions from the top downward. Mass political participation was supposed to change in the sense that it was to become more a means for implementing the flow of orders from above than an attempt to influence input into the decision-making organs. The monopoly of power established through one ruling party was paralleled in the political sphere by a monopoly over the ideology and information system, which increased the possibility of manipulating the population.

It seems that besides breaking down the old structure of political communication and introducing a new one, there were at least three major related policies, which among other aims, were intended to eliminate the spread of "undesirable" information among the population. These three restrictive policies fall into the following categories:

1. change in the economic system,
2. reconstitution of elites,
3. political purges.

1. Change in the economic system. The consistent replacement of private means of production by "nationalized" ones,[10] centralized in structure, had several important consequences in the social, political and economic sphere. Some of these consequences will be mentioned later in this chapter, but most of them will not be discussed here, because they are not directly related to the topic of this thesis. However, those consequences related to political communication should be briefly mentioned.

The fact that the population became very dependent economically on the new political system, and open expression of disloyalty to this system had negative consequences at least on one's manner and level of living, created an atmosphere which severely inhibited open political expression. In other words, one of the reasons for so consistent a nationalization of means of production was probably to make everybody dependent on the existing political system. It was probably assumed that economic independence gives a better chance to escape, at least in part, political dependency, leaving more room for a person to express his ideas and opinions openly.

The second consequence of "nationalization" of the means of production, in relation to political communication, was a considerable elimination of economic relations with countries with a different political system, particularly Western democracies. (Political relations with these countries were already restricted in an earlier period after 1948.) A concomitant modification of the Czechoslovak economy was to direct it more in the interest of the communist bloc, primarily the USSR.

This break in relations between Czechoslovakia and the West, together with the prohibition of free travel and the importation of books and papers from Western countries, was supposed to prevent "undesirable" ideas, opinions and information from coming into the country. In other words, this meant substantial restriction of traditional sources of information for the Czechoslovakian population.

2. Reconstitution of elites. Change-overs in the members of elite groups were accomplished in various ways after 1948. Unfortunately, we do not have precise data about how many university teachers lost their positions between 1948 and 1953, or how many experts and members of intelligentsia in general had to leave their posts in the same period. Nor are there data on how many prominent intellectuals and politicians were among those tens of thousands of people who left the country in 1948.

It is generally known that from 1948 on people were being chosen for "important" posts, higher education, etc., more on the basis of their political persuasions and social origins than their competence.[11] To assure that this reconstitution of the elites would remain permanent, "the method devised for selecting people for a job according to their loyalty to the ruling group, known as the cadre system", was introduced, "built on interlocking channels of reciprocal control."[12]

Besides the aim of assuring that only people devoted to the existing political system would enter positions considered "important"--though not always the case in practice--this arrangement had another aim. That was to prevent people who seemed to be "dangerous", because of their previous activities and experiences, from getting into positions where they could communicate their ideas and knowledge to the public. This applied particularly to the economic experts who had previous experience in the pre-socialist period. Included as well were teachers in social fields who had a non-Marxist approach, and people politically active in the previous period and therefore considered devoted to liberal democratic values.

3. Political purges. This phenomenon is directly connected with the above section on "reconstitution of elites". People who were able to reveal "undesirable" information were not only isolated and put into a position where they were not able to communicate with the public; they were often purged in more drastic ways. It was not a coincidence that purges were directed mainly against those who were tied by their experience and sympathy to traditional democratic values in the country, or to contemporary so-called western democratic values, and who were in a position

to exercise some influence.[13] They were also directed against those who were not willing to forget the Party program of 1945, which had stressed "the Czechoslovak democratic way" to socialism, without dictatorship of the proletariat[14] (which meant respect not only for traditional democratic values in the country but for national interests as well).

In sum, changes in the structure of political communication and in its functions, together with the elimination of all "undesirable" sources of information, was supposed to ensure that only information considered by the CP leadership (and eventually by CP organs on a lower level) as "irreproachable" would have access to channels of political communication and consequently to the public. This does not mean that practice strictly adhered to this ideal, although there was a period of time, 1948-1953, when information coming to the public from official sources was very limited and distorted. However, these restrictions gradually became less effective.

Between 1948 and 1953 the political atmosphere in the country markedly limited the use of "unofficial" channels of communication. However, after 1953, and particularly after 1956, following the official denunciation of "Stalinist methods" by Khrushschev in the USSR, more information and opinions which did not strictly reflect the Party "line" came to the public through "official" as well as "unofficial" channels.

Considering the quantity of unorthodox ideas about political issues which were publicly expressed by intellectuals and some politicians in 1968, and considering the political participation of the population during the same period, one has to ask: what were the major factors which contributed to the developments in 1968, and when did they begin to play a significant role?

The official and public rejection of "Stalinist methods" in 1956 certainly played a very important part in the initial stimulus to liberalization. The political atmosphere became more favourable for expressing opinions about issues which were "taboo" as topics of public discussion until 1956. Views were beginning to be expressed which could, at least to a certain degree, be considered as unorthodox.

However, there were other phenomena which played a very significant role in the acceleration of this process of "opening" the channels of communication for more politically relevant information and unorthodox ideas. It seems that the most important of these phenomena were the following:

1. The role of a new intellectual elite,
2. "Destalinization",

3. Rehabilitation,
4. Failure of the centralized economic system,
5. Czechoslovakian political culture.

1. The role of a new intellectual elite. It has already been mentioned that a large part of all elites was replaced by new members recruited from among the members of the CP or its supporters,[15] more on the basis of their political persuasions, orientations and activities than on the basis of their professional competence. This appears to explain the fact that these new members of elites, particularly intellectuals, devoted to the idea of building socialism in the country (and usually Marxist in persuasion), soon began to feel that they had a greater right of access to information and to influence policy and decision-making to a greater extent than they were in fact granted. With their gradually increasing education in a broad sense of this word, they began to look at the social, economic and political situation in terms of differences between the Marxist theory and existing practice. This was probably the first step for many of them in a search for the sources of this inconsistency. In other words, this was the beginning of the process considered by the participants as a "search for the truth", which culminated in 1968, carried out mostly by intellectuals.

2. Destalinization. Official repudiation of Stalinist methods was only the beginning of the so-called

"process of destalinization", which had been officially taking place since 1956.

To make this process more thorough, attempts were made to define "Stalinism" and to discover its roots.[16] In theory, not only the actions against innocent people and the methods by which these were carried out were included under the term "Stalinist methods", but more and more those economic and social practices which had been introduced after 1948 were also so labelled. From the point of view of those who were in favour of social, economic and political reforms, the terms "Stalinism" or "Stalinist methods", were happy ones because anything that was compromised by the past might eventually be branded by this term. Since the social, economic and political changes after February 1948 were so broad and had been introduced largely prior to 1953, the potential application of these terms was almost unlimited.

However, in practice the speed of the "process of destalinization" was not very satisfactory for those who were in favour of broader political and economic changes, particularly rehabilitation of political victims; and decentralization of economy was never fully realized under Novotny.[17] Dissatisfaction with the slowness of destalinization appeared openly from time to time, especially among intellectuals. The major obstacle to destalinization in the broader sense of this word was generally regarded to be the existing CP leadership, a majority of whose top echelon was involved in the purges of the 1950's.[18]

Im sum, because the fact that the "process of destalinization" was introduced as part of an official policy, discussions about certain existing problems began to appear in some magazines and journals after 1956. Their number, as well as the number of people expressing unorthodox ideas, increased gradually, resulting in mounting tensions between a considerable part of the intellectuals and the CP leadership. However, despite the fact that "destalinization" was far from being carried out thoroughly by the authorities, its proclamation permitted the expression of more and various opinions and information, which began to flow through the existing official and unofficial channels of political communication. This new climate seems to have influenced the population as well as other members of elites, including some politicians.

3. Rehabilitation. This issue is actually an aspect of "destalinization", but because it was potentially in a position to play a very important role in the 1960's, it should be discussed separately.

Rehabilitation of people punished for "political" reasons was officially supposed to have been taking place from 1956 on. Yet it took six years just to set up a committee under D. Kolder, "which was supposed to investigate cases of the leading communists prosecuted in the 1949-1954 period.[19] "Leading communists" were only a small part of tens of thousands of purged people, and no committee was set up to investigate these other cases. However, the results of the work of this committee, even in this very limited area, were not very great--for reasons that gradually became more apparent. A part of the existing leadership, as already mentioned, was responsible in some way for purges, and therefore these members were neither interested in a thorough-going rehabilitation of tens of thousands of people nor in a rehabilitation of the purged leading communists. Rehabilitating these people would reveal the activity of responsible people and expose their actions to severe criticism. This could bring into question their competence as leaders of the nation not only in the 1950's but for the contemporary period and for the future as well.

On the other hand, tens of thousands of rehabilitated people would have to get back their posts, and it would be difficult to expect them to be devoted to people who were responsible for their privation. Barbara Jancar goes so far as to state that "the key to the power struggle of 1968 lies in the explosive force latent in the possession of the truth about the trials and the attitude taken by the few who were initiated into their mysteries."[20]

In other words, "thorough-going" rehabilitation concealed in itself a great potential for the removal of "compromised" people from their posts and their replacement by people who were not so compromised. The people, who were already in favour of broader reforms before 1968, were probably very aware of this possibility, and this was a likely reason why demands for "thorough-going" rehabilitation were expressed more and more emphatically.

Among those who were in favour of reforms there was a strong inclination to believe that the conservatism and incompetence of people who possessed most of the decision-making power were the major obstacle to the realization of economic reforms. They believed if there was a broad replacement of prominent political personalities by more competent individuals, then the necessary economic, political and social changes could take place. To compromise these people by reason of their activity in the 1950's and to expect their resignation or recall seemed to be the most obvious and easiest available method to achieve desirable changes.

4. Failures of the centralized economic system. The favourable situation in the Czechoslovakian economy after the Second World War as compared to other European countries was perhaps the most important factor which helped to conceal the failures of the centralized economy for almost a decade. However, these failures became apparent as early as the end of the 1950's and soon began to play a very significant role in the political sphere because

economic efficiency was held to be the most important indicator of legitimacy of a socialist government.

There are a few major factors which played a significant role in fostering dissent concerning the economic situation in the country. Firstly, a rapid falling off in the intensity of the Cold War in the middle of the 1950's and a decline in the use of terrorist methods gradually allowed a greater degree of hitherto suppressed demands to be more openly expressed. Secondly, in the beginning of the 1960's insufficient economic flexibility and inefficiency became very apparent. Failures of the economy showed themselves fully in the shocking situation in 1963, when Czechoslovakia was the only country that showed a decrease in gross national product.[21] Third, if the legitimacy of the political system was not to be questioned in the near future, the Communist leadership had to try to improve the economic situation. The leadership's interest in rapid improvement of the economy made possible not only discussions about the improvement of the economic system, but also permitted investigations of the reasons of failure as well.

The unsatisfactory state of the economy came to be considered a result of the erroneous decisions made under Stalinism and the imposed centralized economic system came to be considered as incompatible with the highly developed Czechoslovak economy. National interests began to be taken more into consideration and often appeared to be at least partially different from those which had been imposed upon the country in regard to the interests of the whole bloc, but primarily of the USSR.

It was generally agreed that new methods could be developed only on the basis of scientific analyses, which would attempt to discover all reasons for the failures, and then all the realistic possibilities for improvement. However, this process of search could be established only on the basis of a broad exchange of information and opinions, which, because of the close relations between the economic and political system, would certainly not limit itself only to the economy, but would go far into an analysis of the past and present situation. Postwar Czechoslovakian experience supports the observation that free exchange of information is one major sector of the political system (and in the case of Czechoslovakia the economic system can be considered as a part of the political system) which tends to increase the flow of communication of information in other sectors.

However, economic reforms which were worked out were in practice applied only partially because the CP leadership did not consider them compatible enough with their political direction. For example, A. Novotny said in 1967: "As long as economic measures are not in harmony with our political aims and our political program, the economic measures cannot be accepted by us, no matter how effective they may be."[22] This attitude constituted another reason for the increased feelings that a change of leading CP personalities was desirable and that only the substitution of constructive leaders would permit broader economic and political reforms.

With regard to policies of the whole socialist bloc, it was generally thought by reformists that increased economic efficiency through all available means for each nation was in the interest of the whole bloc. However, it is likely that Novotny's attitude was more in harmony with the attitude of the Soviet leadership, and so the growth of differences between individual socialist countries and greater cooperation with Western countries were not considered as desirable.

In sum, it can be said that the failures of the centralized economic system, and the interest of the leadership in its improvement, were major factors in the increased communication in the sphere of economic ideas. Because of the close relation between economic and political spheres, this increased communication of information and opinions probably accelerated the same process in other areas related to policy making as well.

5. Political culture. Explanation of the background of political developments in Czechoslovakia would not be complete if "pressures" coming from the society upon the decision-making bodies were not included among those

aspects which played an important role in those developments. These pressures, coming primarily from an increasing number of interest groups, various organizations and associations, as will be seen in more detail in the next chapter, were an obvious sign of significantly increased political participation on the part of the population. A. Korbonski goes as far as to recommend use of a "groups' model" for studying Czechoslovakian politics in 1968, and states that "the group behaviour . . . resembled closely the behaviour of groups in Western societies despite the presence of a Party which . . . was firmly opposed to the existence of autonomous groups."[23] This increased "political participation" can best be explained in terms of Almond and Verba's concept of political culture,[24] because it can hardly be supposed that a "participatory political orientation"[25] can suddenly be "born" in a country to which it was completely absent during its previous history. With regard to Czechoslovakia, their concept seems to be applicable. Considering the highly differentiated political and social structure of pre-1948 Czechoslovakia, for example, (with the exception of the period of German occupation), and the representation of a plurality of interests through political parties and interest organizations, it can be stated with confidence that the traditional political culture in the country was participatory, that is, that members of the polity were oriented to the input side as well as output side of the political system. In short, the democratic structure of the existing political system[26] was congruent with the participatory political orientation of the population.

It does not seem that twenty years of experience with an authoritarian system, with its attempts to change the pre-existing participatory political orientation of the population into a kind of "manipulable mass", really succeeded; and it seems that the chief result of this attempt was growing apathy and alienation to the existing political system on the part of the majority of the population. Gradually this apathy and alienation affected the majority of the CP members as well. Thus, it seems that incongruence between an imposed authoritarian political system and a participatory political culture did not result in the disappearance of the latter, but rather its suppression. In other words, the popular participatory political orientation did not die, but rather went "under the surface". This perhaps explains the rapid development of groups, organizations and associations among the population in 1968, and especially their role in pressuring the leadership in the direction of developing a more democratic political system in the country. The similar role played also individuals, ad hoc meetings, etc., as will be seen in the next chapter.

To summarize generally the major efforts of those who were striving for liberalization of the political system between 1956 and 1967, it can be said that a considerable portion of the intellectuals involved themselves from the second half of the 1950's in searching for the reasons for the social, economic and political crisis. At the same time they tried to analyze the existing conditions in the country in an attempt to determine the solution to the crisis. Progressive opinions expressed mainly in a few magazines and journals in this period refuted the Stalinist approach to socialist society, which ignored natural differences among groups and individuals, viewing them as vestiges of capitalism and its traditional class conflict,[27] and the official recognition of various interests in a socialist society was demanded. Progress began to be viewed as the result of "free confrontation of conflicting interests".[28] The major function of leading circles was seen to lie in harmonizing these interests, using the contradictions as signals for the need to find better ways of unifying the specific interests with the pre-determined aim of socialist society. These efforts resulted in official recognition of the persistence of non-antagonistic classes and legitimacy of various interests in contemporary socialist society in the Party "Thesis" of December 1965,[29] which recognized that even socialist society is not homogeneous.

However, these theoretical gains were far from being applied in practice, despite the fact that most existing social organizations, particularly mass organizations, were in a somewhat incongruous position. Generally they were not able to take on new functions, mainly because a sufficiently legitimate basis had not been created to permit an easy transition of their functions. It seems that increased political participation of certain strata of society between 1962-1967, and the insufficient institutionalized channels through which this participation might be expressed, led to political dissension in 1967. That year was characterized by B. Jancar as the year of "accumulation of grievances."[30]

It seems that efforts to establish new and legitimate institutions were spreading not only in the society at large but also among many members of the ruling elite. This gradually created great tension between those who in 1968 were called "liberals" on the one hand and "conservatives" on the other. Between 1962 and 1967 efforts were made to influence the existing official approaches of the prevailing Communist leadership to political, economic and social conditions by means of philosophical and scientific analyses and discussions, "with a view to providing a legal and institutional structure for reforms and proposed changes so as to safeguard them from later reversal."[31]

Simultaneously, the failures of the centrally directed economy produced suitable conditions for activization of the population on the one hand, and on the other hand for the virtual disintegration of existing social organizations, which were not suitable for the expression of interests and demands of their members. Increased participation of people became channelled into spontaneous actions, and demands were directed toward democratization of the whole system. However, this process (labelled in its original moderate form as "destalinization") clashed with the views of the prominent personalities in the CP decision-making bodies, especially those at the highest level, for already discussed reasons.

A different period of development began with personnel changes in the leadership at the end of 1967 and the beginning of 1968. To explain these changes as a logical end to the above described process would not be a sufficient explanation. To make the picture complete, it is necessary to take into consideration not only domestic developments, but also the international situation as well, especially with regard to the USSR. It is not the purpose of this chapter to describe the progress of the changing scene between the USSR and other countries (particularly with China, dating from the end of the 1950's). However, the most important factor of this development--growing instability of the relationships between the USSR and China--apparently increased the interest of the USSR in the stability of the Eastern European part of the Communist bloc, central to which was the internal "stability" of each country.

It did not seem that the situation in Czechoslovakia at the end of 1967 guaranteed the stability which the USSR needed. Novotny's failure to prevent open expression of bitter dissatisfaction with the official policy and his failure to prevent expression of unorthodox demands by prominent groups (e.g., writers, economists, students), weakened not only his position inside the country, but also his role as a suitable political leader in the eyes of the Soviet leadership. The decreasing support for Novotny on the part of the Soviet leadership came to a head in December, 1967, when Brezhnev, invited by Novotny to help him to restore his position and prevent the election of somebody else to the position of the First Secretary, is reported to have said to the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CP, ". . . Comrades, this is your own affair. Settle it among yourselves."[32]

As already mentioned, the most important aim of the change from the Soviet view, was probably to increase the stability of the political system in the country. The expectation that the replacement of one or a few people in the highest decision-making bodies would increase the political activity was probably based on the assumption that it was generally believed that all failures in the society were the result of faulty decision-making by top people who had not correctly implemented the "party line". Another implicit assumption probably was that it was possible to exclude completely the question of the legitimacy of the existing political system, and that it was possible through changes of the top leadership to increase the "faith" of the population in the competence of the CP as a "leading force" in the country, and thereby also to keep mass participation within clearly defined limits.

However, political developments in Czechoslovakia in 1968 went in the direction of increased mass participation in politics, and in the direction of making important changes in the structure of the society. The major reason that this kind of development took place probably was that new members of the leadership had to seek support for themselves and their policies in a very tense situation in the Central Committee, where many so-called "conservatives" retained important posts and were not willing to give them up voluntarily. To find support from the rank and file members of the CP and the population under circumstances of continued failure could only be done on the basis of much greater response to the interests of the society. The first step to know these interests was to permit scope for their expression. It might even be said that the leadership, once it found itself in the position where it enjoyed support from below, took its responsibility to the rank and file members and other citizens (and later to the interests of the nation as a whole) more seriously than it was expected by the Soviet leadership. The seriously weakened command structure and the broad exchange of information on vertical as well as horizontal levels, and the intensified relationship with the Western countries in all fields, decreased the possibility of manipulation of individuals as well as the public at large. This was contrary to the basic principles of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe.

It is a complex task to account for the process of substantial change in the nature of the CP leadership in Czechoslovakia in 1968. However, the influence of information flowing through newly opened channels of communication on the leadership and population is considered in this study to be one of the most important. An attempt will be made in the last chapter to describe and analyze some aspects of this process. But before this attempt can be made, it is necessary first to discuss changes in the structure of the channels of communication and the content of information flowing through them, which seem to be crucial to the 1968 liberalization movement in Czechoslovakia.

FOOTNOTES

[1] R. R. Fagen, Politics and Communication (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 33.

[2] The CP received in elections on May 25, 1946, 40-17% of votes in Bohemia and 30-37% of votes in Slovakia. Dejiny Ceskoslovenska Datech (Prague: Svoboda, 1968), p. 486.

[3] V. V. Kusin, The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 8-10.

[4] Ibid., p. 10.

[5] Dejiny, p. 471.

[6] Z. Hejzlar, "K politice a vnitrnimu vyvoji KSC po r. 1948", Systemove zmeny (Koln: Index, 1972), p. 71.

[7] In 1954 it had 1,489,234 members. Hejzlar, K politice, p. 79.

[8] S. H. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 264-266.

[9] Dejiny, p. 471.

[10] By 1950 almost all means of production were incorporated in the socialist sector. Z. Suda, The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 40.

[11] B. W. Jancar, Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 29.

[12] Ibid., p. 29.

[13] Ibid., p. 101.

[14] In great purges (1950-1953) the proportion of intellectuals among sentenced people was 35-40%. Hejzlar, op. cit., p. 75.

[15] Ibid., p. 80.

[16] M. Sucky, "Freedom of Criticism and the Development of Marxist Theory", Otazky Marxisticke Filosofie, XIX (May, 1964), pp. 409-414.

[17] G. Golan, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 5.

[18] The role of these individuals differs, and it would be difficult to find out what the role of each of them was. However, for example, A. Novotny was made a Party Secretary in September 1951, at the same meeting which marked Slansky's first major demotion. G. Golan, "Antonin Novotny: The Sources and Nature of his Power", Canadian Slavonic Papers, XIV (No. 3, Autumn, 1972), p. 422.

[19] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 10.

[20] B. W. Jancar, "The Great Purges and the 'Prague Spring'", Orbis, XX (No. 2, Summer, 1971), p. 622.

[21] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 12.

[22] J. Triska, "Political Change in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Intervention", I. W. Zartman, ed., Czechoslovakia Intervention and Impact (New York: New York University Press, 1970), p. 3.

[23] A. Korbonski, "Bureaucracy and Interest Groups in Communist Societies: The Case of Czechoslovakia", Studies in Comparative Communism, IV (January, 1971), p. 79.

[24] G. A. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 30.

[25] Ibid., p. 30.

[26] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 44-45.

[27] M. Lakatos, "O urcitych problemoch nasej politickej sustavy", Obzor, LIIX (January, 1965), pp. 25-36.

[28] Ibid., pp. 25-36.

[29] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 153.

[30] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, p. 23.

[31] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 223.

[32] H. Schwartz, Prague's 200 Days (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p. 4.

CHAPTER III

CHANNELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

In the previous chapter it was stated that the most significant aspects of the 1968 developments in Czechoslovakia could be focused upon in terms of the channels of communication, and their content, which existed in the country at that time. It is now necessary to point out those channels which seem to be the most significant in the complicated network of political communication.

To distinguish "more" or "less" important channels is not an easy task. In this thesis an attempt will be made to make a distinction on the basis of the direction and intensity of their influence on policy making. In order to make the approach more lucid, the distinction between channels as structure and their content will be made throughout. At the same time a brief comparison of the structure and content in the 1968 and pre-1968 period will be made. The comparison will be less precise, because even before 1968 the situation in this sphere was a changing one.

The Structure of Channels of Communication

When we consider the structure of the channels of communication, a further distinction between formal and informal channels must be made. Despite the fact that the stress in this paper will be on so-called "formal" channels and their content, the importance of "informal" channels (e.g., various meetings of interest groupings, face-to-face communication among prominent personalities and among the population generally, the intensified communication with western countries, etc.) played a very significant role in forming attitudes toward the existing political system and toward possible alternatives. Some of these attitudes will be mentioned at the end of this chapter; however, the main stress, as already mentioned, will be on the structure of "formal" channels of communication, their content and influence.

To the core of the formal channels of communication belong the mass media--the press, radio and television. When we look at the basic structure of the mass media, with the exception of the press, we find that it did not change significantly. There were 80 radio stations and 21 TV stations in 1966,[1] and this number did not change in 1968. As to the number of radio receivers per 1,000 people, there were 333 and the number of TV receivers per 1,000 people was 167 in 1966[2]. There are no data available for the year 1968; but it can hardly be supposed that a number of radio and TV receivers increased very much.

With regard to the press the situation was somewhat different. There was a rapid increase in the circulation of daily newspapers, magazines and journals. In 1967 there were 1,381,280 copies of daily newspapers in circulation.[3] In the middle of 1968 circulation increased by half a million,[4] bringing total circulation to 1,881,280. This means that there were 97 copies per 1,000 population in 1967 compared to 132 in the middle of 1968. A shortage of paper was officially presented as the reason that circulation did not increase more.[5] Politically the most prominent weekly magazine was Literarni noviny, abolished by the CP leadership in the autumn of 1967, it was renewed in March 1968 under the name of Literarni listy, and once again became the most prominent magazine in presenting new information and unorthodox opinions and ideas.

The volume of relevant political information of this part of the network of communication became greatly enlarged in 1968. By "substructure" is meant a number of politically relevant speeches, discussions, articles and information in the press and on radio and television. This enlargement of the substructure was largely dependent upon the initiative of intellectuals and prominent politicians, because official censorship was not abolished by law until June 25, 1968. From this date on, editors became responsible for the content of what was being published, and the secrecy of information was reduced to that pertaining to state, economic and some other matters.[6] This official censorship was actually established only on January 1, 1967, under the pressure of writers and newspapermen. The Press Law provided for a Central Administration for Publication which had the right to prevent publication of anything it considered a state, economic, or official secret. The censor was also to protect "other interests of society", defined as (a) material the publication of which would violate the law, (b) material which was biased against the policies and ideological line of the state, or (c) material the publication of which would harm the interests of society as a whole.[7] This law was not what writers had wanted, though in practice it meant a certain improvement vis-a-vis the pre-1967 period because an institution was established whose rights were defined by law, and at least theoretically it became easier for publishing houses to fight on legal grounds with the censor for permission to publish works which they wished to bring out. The Central Administration for Publication, which did not function in the old way after January 1968, was suspended in early March.[8]

Another aspect very significant to political communication in the country was the rapid growth in the number of organized meetings outside and inside of the Communist Party. Basically, these meetings were of two different types: one kind was conducted for the purpose of discussion and exchange of information and opinions on various social, political and economic issues among interested people and some prominent politicians and experts. The second type was organised by members of various institutions and they were not open to the public. Announcement of public meetings was usually made a few days in advance in the newspapers, on the radio and television. These meetings were organized first in Prague, later in other cities and towns. The form of the meeting usually consisted of short speeches of some politicians and experts, and the rest of the time the members of the public questioned the politicians and experts. One example of these meetings will serve to illustrate their significance. At the meeting in Sjezdovy Palace in Prague on March 21, more than a dozen of the most prominent politicians and experts were questioned by a public of several thousand, with another few thousand outside listening to the proceedings transmitted through loudspeakers.[9] Similar meetings took place in Slovansky House,[10] in Hradcany Castle[11] in Prague.

Issues raised at these meetings will be discussed later in this chapter, but it might be useful to point out here that the main concern on the part of the questioning public was with guarantees that the democratization process would evolve to democracy--defined in terms of removal of incompetent party and state functionaries, changes in electoral law, guarantees of civic freedom, popular control of power, the possibility of interest group pluralism, and so forth.

The main significance of this kind of meeting could probably be defined in terms of intensive contacts between prominent politicians (usually members of the Central Committee of the CP and often of the Presidium and Secretariat as well), experts (particularly social and economic ones), and the public. At these meetings the public was in a position to express their opinions and attitudes related to the present political development directly to the members of the highest decision-making bodies. Considering that these professional politicians were also often involved in meetings organized outside of Prague, this kind of communication could have had some significance in the creation of more responsive attitudes of high Party functionaries to the interests of the public.

The second type of meeting was organized in various institutions, schools, scientific institutes, factories and new social organizations and organized only for members of these individual workplaces--e.g., students,[12] newspapermen, workers, the Art Federation,[13] etc. The members of these organizations held these meetings for the purpose of discussing the post-January development, the Action Program, and their own problems and interests. Communication at these meetings was of a personal and face-to-face nature. They usually ended not only with positive expressions regrading the post-January political development but also with the formulation of their programs; at the same time they usually expressed demands related to the conditions for their work. For example, social and scientific institutes often expressed the demand for freedom of scientific inquiry and research and for independence from Party organs.[14]

Very radical demands relating to scientific freedom were expressed in the Protest Analysis sent by the Czechoslovak Academy of Science to the Ministry of Education and to the Central Committee of the CP.[15] It was common practice for a summary of a meeting discussing politically relevant issues and problems to be prepared, in the form of an analysis, letter, report, etc., and sent to the editorial board of some prominent paper and at the same time to the Central committee of the CP, or to one of its departments.

This intensified communication activity thus resulted in a growing awareness of common interests among various strata of society and opened the way for the establishment of new social interest organizations. These new organizations became an additional part of the network of the channels of communication and a nucleus for the exchange of information and formulation of opinions and demands regarding future political and social development. These organizations are considered in this thesis as a part of the formal structure of the channels of communication.

The intensified process of "grouping" began as early as March, when the "Klub 231" was created. This organization was generally considered to be one of the most important in terms of political influence upon the population as well as upon the leadership. It was founded by former political prisoners, with the aim of helping to rehabilitate some forty thousand people who had been unjustly punished for so-called political reasons. Its aim was also to help develop democracy in the country.[16]

Another important organization, formed in April by 144 people who were not members of the Party, was KAN, the Club of Committed non-Party People. The main aim of its program, initiated by I. Svitak, was to instill in the people a sense of responsibility for the political development of the country and particularly to make all possible efforts to ensure that democracy would become a reality in the country. Free exchange of information and equality of Party members with non-Party people was considered to be a fundamental assumption for future development.[17]

In March, teachers in the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University attempted to create a Union of Scientific Workers which would serve to effect more rapid and intensive communication among scientists.[18] In April, the Czech Association for Political Science was established with the aim of concentrating on research into political theories, the political system in Czechoslovakia, and on international relations.[19] Some more specialized clubs were created during the Spring, for example, the Circle of Independent (non-Party) Writers, and the League for Engaged Action, and the Club of Critical Thought. From the beginning of the year many new youth organizations were created, such as the Union of Working Youth, the Union of Slovak Agriculture

Youth;[20] and in April the Federation of Youth Clubs was established at a national meeting of representatives of youth clubs from all over the country.[21] Beginning in the early Spring sport organizations such as Sokol and Junak, which had been abolished after 1948 were renewed. Other organizations, less politically significant, were being created during the whole period of liberalization.

This very brief review of the development of new organizations in 1968 is not an exhaustive account of all new groupings, but it does serve to point out the continuous trend of development in 1968. However, relatively rapid growth of social organizations was still far from achieving the quantity of these organizations in the pre-1948 period, when there were sixty thousand social organizations and associations in Czechoslovakia.[22] We do not have exact figures on the number of new organizations in 1968; still, it can hardly be supposed that it increased over the 1967 figure by more than a few hundred by August 1968, and the official figure of social organizations in 1967 was eight hundred.[23]

It is worth noting that the recognition of the legality of mass organizations was dependent on registration with the National Committee of the City of Prague, or with the Interior Ministry. In other words, their legal existence was dependent on the will of the CP leadership, which was uneasy about the emergence of new, particularly mass, organizations. By June 18, only one of seventy requests for registration with the Interior Ministry had actually been granted--that of the Czechoslovak League for Human Rights, and the promised law which would guarantee freedom of association was not expected until the fall.[24]

Besides increasing the possibility of exchange of opinions and information through new interest groupings, i.e., through expansion of the formal structure of communication, this development had an important additional effect. It was breaking down the command structure of the society, which previously had been an important part of the formal communication system. Barbara Jancar states that "by the summer of 1968, the command structure was ceasing to exist."[25] The "command structure" or "Stalinist mobilization system" was never considered to be very efficient in Czechoslovakia[26] and it seems that breaking down the command structure as the basis of political communication and formation of interest groups was a related process. If we agree that the failure of the mobilization system resulted in alienation and apathy on the part of the majority of the population toward the existing political system in the pre-1968 period, it seems that at the time of considerable relaxation of this centralized system the political and social participation of the population rapidly increased. This process seems to have been comprehensive, because broader political issues were always present in the minds and activity of members of the newly founded interest organizations.

A further important part of the formal structure of political communication is the Communist Party. Here the flow of information took several different directions. On one hand, information flowed from non-Party people and rank-and-file members of the CP up to the leadership; and on the other hand the flow of information was from the leadership downward. This kind of communication could perhaps be labelled, in Hoffman's terms, "vertical" communication.[27] However, there was also a flow of information between single high Party organs, especially between the Presidium and Secretariat and the Central Committee, and there was a kind of communication which paralleled the hierarchical structure of the Party which was of considerable importance. Communication between lower Party organs on the same level, which could be expressed in Hoffman's term as "horizontal" communication, seems to have been less important.[28]

The command structure of the CP created a special kind of communication within the Party, and it was considered even by the leadership as inefficient. It was known that before 1968 even the Central Committee of the CP was either not informed about discussions in the Presidium, or it often received distorted information. The Party leadership was also well aware that the flow of information upward to the top party organs was very inefficient. This problem had already been discussed at the meeting of the Central Committee of the CP in October 1967, in relation to the Party's "leading role" function, which was found to be very inefficient as well. A new role for the Party was prescribed at this meeting: it was supposed to become a more efficient collector of information for the purpose of guaranteeing a more intensive flow of information to the top.[29]

At the meeting of the Presidium of the CP in February 1968, this question was discussed again in relation to increasing the efficiency of the Party's activity, and proper information was supposed to be one of the main prerequisites for efficient work. However, one more fundamental step was made at this meeting: information flowing to the Party leadership began to be considered as a necessary part of the whole information system, and the decision was made that the entire network (apparently including all formal channels of communication) would be improved.[30] Consequently this meant the possibility for the improvement of exchange of information in general.

When we look more closely at changes in communication inside the Party during 1968, it seems that fundamental changes were made only at the higher Party level. The lower organs of the CP (region, district, area) were organizaed on a hierarchical principle and were used mainly to carry out the orders of the next higher level. These organs were not flexible enough to respond to demands of the people. Instructions from above lost their previous "command" nature, and the situation often became too confused for professional, rigid Party functionaries.[31] For example, the regional committee of the CP of Brno concluded at one of its meetings that in order to increase the effectiveness of the leadership role of the CP, and to defend this leading role, Communists would have to know the political situation in the country better. They would have to know the attitudes and desires of the people. Moreover, Communists (meaning in all probability the professional Party functionaries) would actually have to learn the art of political discussion from non-Communists.[32]

Similar findings can be obtained from an examination of Party conferences at the district and area levels, which began taking place after early March. However, their political initiative was usually limited to expressing a need for more accurate instructions from above.[33] In more concrete terms they demanded a kind of model of intra-Party relationships between the Central Committee and the Presidium, as well as between the Secretariat and individual departments, which would introduce relationships applicable to lower Party organs.[34] There is evidence that regional and district Party functionaries were refusing to participate at meetings organized by citizens.[35]

With regard to intra-Party communication on the highest level, the importance of personal, face-to-face communication cannot be stressed enough, despite the fact that it would be very difficult to investigate this kind of communication empirically. It is generally known that members of the Presidium, Secretariat and the Central Committee were in almost daily interaction in 1968. The importance of this communication can be considered greater if we remember that some of the most prominent experts (for example, Ota Sik, a leading exponent of economic reform, and Zdenek Mlynar, an important political theorist) were members of the Central Committee during this period. These experts were often able to bring results of face-to-face communication with their colleagues directly to the Central Committee because in some fields scientific institutes were concentrated mainly in Prague and personal communication among scientists was very easy. For example, "since there were only very few universities and other institutions of higher learning offering economics as a field of study, nearly all economists in the country knew each other and retained some form of contact even though their careers took different paths."[36]

The conclusion of this brief discussion about intra-Party communication is that this became considerably more intensive and effective between higher Party organs than between these organs and those on lower levels or between lower-level organs themselves. At the same time the old system of communication based on the command principle (i.e., the flow of orders from the top downwards) was considerably weakened, and Party functionaries, especially in lower-level Party organs, were apparently incapable of filling this gap by their own initiative, based on increased communication with the population.

With regard to the structure of the channels of communication in 1968, the description of two other political parties, existing as subordinate parts of the CP in the National Front should be included. These parties did not contribute greatly to the liberal movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968. However, they certainly did increase their own activities. The question of the existence of other political parties in Czechoslovakia will be discussed later in this chapter; only those aspects relevant to the structure of the channels of communication will be mentioned here.

None of these parties contacted the public for the purpose of widening its restricted membership. This could only be because of the negative attitude of the CP leadership to their activities. However, they organized public meetings at which they talked about their programs and beliefs. From 1948 onward, their position was never equal to that of the CP in the National Front, despite the fact that provisions for their equality in the National Front were established in the 1946 Constitution (Statute No. 67).

The Constitution of 1964 on does not mention any political parties with the exception of the Communist Party. As an example of changes in the membership of these parties, both parties existing apart from the Communist Party can be mentioned. Membership in the People's Party decreased from 483,725 in 1948 to 21,362 in 1968, and the Socialist Party suffered a decrease in membership from 370,327 in 1949 to 10,705 in 1968.[38]

The magazine Student conducted interviews with the leaders of these two parties in April and found that they considered the free exchange of opinions with the CP in the framework of the National Front as the basis for their possible future work. Also, autonomy from the CP leadership's interference in their internal party activity (e.g., electoral activity) was stressed in this discussion. However, none of these parties intended to become a mass party and thus to compete with the CP. Their official position in this period was to recognize the leading role of the CP in the political system.[39] Yet it would not be completely accurate to make a generalization about the nature of their perspectives from these official statements. It would be difficult to predict what their future development might have been, had the question of becoming a member of one of these parties been simply a matter of an application, and if free and secret elections had prevailed. There is some evidence from the later period that potentially different trends of development were not impossible. For example, at the public meeting in the little town of Domazlice in June, leading figures of the People's Party discussed their program, and a few days later this program and accompanying speeches were attacked in the Party newspaper Rude Pravo. The program was not considered sufficiently respectful of the CP and particular hostility was expressed toward all ideas which did not take for granted the leading role of the CP in the country.[40]

The activity of political parties was gradually increasing, and there appeared to be strong possibility that the Social Democratic Party (which as a Marxist party was fused with the CP in 1948) would be reestablished. The Preparatory Committee for founding the SDP was a cause of considerable worry to the CP leadership, and the Central Committee of the National Front proclaimed in June that it was against any party which would be established outside the National Front, because it would be an opportunity for "anti-socialist" forces to become active. Furthermore, it maintained, this would not be legal because of the content of the common program since 1946, which included building socialism in the country.[41] Considering that the Social Democratic Party was a Marxist party, this argument was less than consistent.

To summarize the position of the political parties (with the exception of the CP) in 1968 in relation to the communication structure, it can be said that they did not become an equal in the political system ~~with~~ the CP. They were dependent for their activities on the liberal movement as a whole. As pointed out earlier, the lack of activity on the part of these parties was probably a result to some extent of the hostile attitude of the CP leadership toward them.

However, it seems that the parties did not make sufficient use of all the possibilities for developing greater communication with the population exerting more pressures on the CP leadership. Thus, it seems that their position in the communication structure was not very significant. The activity of the former members of the Social Democratic Party, which was of a different nature, will be discussed further in relation to the content of channels of communication, particularly with regard to the political system in the country.

To summarize the description of the structure of the channels of communication, it can be said that the mass media (press, radio, television) were at the core of the formal structure. They were in the best position to collect information from various sources and to disseminate it to the public--information to which it would not otherwise have had access. Beside this formal structure of communication, informal channels (e.g., various meetings, face-to-face communication) also played a significant role, as will be explicated later in this chapter.

The description of changes in the structure of the communication system does not say very much about the influence of the information flowing through them upon policy making and public opinion. Also, the increased quantity of information flow in 1968, however important, would by itself hardly play a significant role in the amount of influence. The nature, quality and variety of information is considered in this essay as the most important influence on policy-making.

The major assumption of this discussion about the content of information flowing through channels of communication is that the changes in the structure of the channels of communication, in the sense of accepting a large quantity of new elements into it or of increasing the quantity of old ones, were the most important prerequisites (a) for spreading politically relevant information and various opinions, (b) for creating conditions under which these opinions became a factor behind which groupings of people began to organize, and (c) for pressures which these groupings exercised subsequently on the decision-making bodies at all levels. These pressures either took the form of direct influence from groups or they were mediated through opinion leaders who could exercise their influence in both directions--on decision-making bodies as well as on public opinion.

In relation to the term "politically-relevant information", one could raise a question regarding the sources of information as a key factor. Though it might be correct, it would be very difficult to identify individual sources of information, because they are so various that this would be a topic for extensive research. For the purpose of this paper it is sufficient to simplify the question and to determine sources in a very general way. It might be helpful to see the channels of communication, with the exception of the mass media (institutions, organizations, groups, etc.), as having an additional function in the sense that members of these bodies had access to facts about economic and social conditions in the country, to historical facts, the results of scientific research, public opinion, decision-making bodies, etc. These and others could probably be considered as those original sources of information.

Information Flowing Through the Channels of Communication

The content of information flowing through the channels of communication was pointed out as being the most significant in relation to policy making, so the major focus of the following discussion will be on those issues under discussion in 1968 which contributed in some way to the analysis of the existing political system and to the formulating possible perspectives on its future development. The majority of ideas presented in 1968 had already appeared in print as early as the period 1956-1967; however, in earlier years they seemed to be overshadowed by a large number of official views, and it appears that they never became topics for much in-depth discussion. There were probably two main reasons why these ideas had mostly an academic appeal: first, the hostility of the CP leadership to all unorthodox ideas prevented many people from getting involved in discussions, and second, the absence of a practical purpose for the new ideas generated by these discussions diminished their relevance.

When the most general view is taken of the issues under discussion in 1968, they could probably be divided into two related groups: (1) all issues concerning possibilities for increasing economic efficiency in the country (here even foreign policy could be included) and (2) issues concerning relationships between those who govern and those governed--i.e., explicitly political issues.

The first issue, which will not be mentioned in more detail here, because it is not directly relevant to the aim of this thesis, had been discussed intensively for more than half a decade. In regard to economic questions, the main task in 1968 was to decide how to develop concrete proposals for the improvement of economic efficiency, how to apply them consistently and as soon as possible, and how to effect greater economic cooperation with those countries which seemed to have more to offer through advantageous trade. Foreign policy, which can also be considered as a part of this broad issue, will be discussed later in relation to the political system.

The second major group of issues, concerning political matters, would probably not have been discussed so intensively had not the struggle for free exchange of information and opinions already been in existence for a long period of time. In this struggle, the channels of communication, particularly the press and some congresses, played a very significant role. For example, as early as 1963 at the Congress of Journalists and at the Congress of Czechoslovak Youth Organizations, demands were heard concerning respect for the law, open criticism of public officials, greater contact with western countries, etc. The demand for freedom of discussion was expressed, and a campaign for all these aims continued in the press.[42] The reason that this early period is stressed here is that it can be considered the beginning of the process of "lessening of authoritarianism" which reached its peak in 1968.

Originally, the issue of freedom of expression was related to attempts to search out the roots of "Stalinism", which in the sphere of exchange of opinions began to be considered the main reason for social stagnation. "Once the principle is established that an exchange of views and mutual criticism are not allowed in a certain sphere (however limited it may be) rigidity of thought in this sphere is inevitable."[43] Consequently, the free expression of opinions began to be related to the progress of society--"the clash of opinions could serve its function as the motor force of society, freely and truly expressed through effective channels."[44]

Perhaps the period 1963-1967 could be labelled as the period of intellectual struggle for opening the channels of communication to a wider range of information and opinions. Therefore, when the pressure of censorship relaxed in the beginning of 1968, the further development of different functions of channels of communication was the predictable consequence of those latent tendencies which had existed previously.

From March 1968 onward, besides public attempts to analyze the political system as it had existed since 1948, there were concrete issues (which were at the same time a part of the analyses) which constituted the core of the struggle between two groups which can be given the general labels of "liberals" and "conservatives". Jancar's general definition seems to be the most convenient for distinguishing between these two groups: the former are "those with a positive approach to change" and the latter are "those favoring the maintenance of the absolute-monopoly status quo".

A complex set of questions related to the existing political system and to its perspectives could be considered.

However, for the purpose of discovering the trends, six major categories of issues can be designated, each of which will be discussed in turn:

1. The political system as a whole
2. Power and its control
3. The future role of the Communist Party
4. Representation of interests
5. Ideology
6. Foreign policy

1. The political system as a whole. Since the political system as a whole was discussed to some degree in the previous chapter, and at the same time all other categories are a part of it, only a brief summary of the 1968 situation need be presented here.

The majority view was that the system was going to stay basically socialist. The meaning of this term was explained in various ways, and Marxist-Leninist theory was not always accepted as its axiomatic foundation.[46] Consequences of the Stalinist system, especially the perceived incapability of it to respond to the interests and demands of society, were generally considered to be present still, and according to one set of views the main problem was how to "improve the existing system in the direction of development of an ability to respond."[47] Another group of opinions was concentrated on the question of whether it was possible to interpret the Stalinist system as a deformation, or whether it was a substitution of one model of the socialist system for another. Consequently, since the mechanism of the Stalinist system still existed, the question of changes was not one of an "improvement" of the existing system but rather of its "replacement" by another.[48]

There was a general supposition that the goal for which a majority in society was striving was the so-called, "socialist democracy", which meant a kind of democracy with considerations of social justice. The term "socialist democracy" was interpreted variously by different people and general agreement on its meaning was never achieved.

Regarding the issue of the political system as a whole, it should be emphasized that definite plans were made to resolve the constitutional relationship between Bohemia and Slovakia. In more concrete terms, provisions were worked out for the establishment of a federal system based on a "symmetrical" principal as opposed to the current one, usually labelled, "asymmetrical".[49]

2. Power and its control. Discussions about political power were mostly focused on questions of the nature of power and the necessity of establishing some kind of control over it. Axioms of these theories were generally presented in terms of the danger that a monopoly of power could be used by the rulers against the ruled,[50] and that every power-system tends to maintain itself.[51] An assumption presented as basic for establishing any kind

of control over power was the necessity of a free confrontation of opinions regarding existing problems.[52] This view was linked to ideas published before 1968 which suggested the possibility of progress through "the clash of opinions . . . freely and truly expressed through effective channels",[53] and which saw guarantees in the expression of opinions in "institutionalized criticism", which presupposed the presence of various kinds of social organizations.[54]

However, it was argued by Vaclav Havel that a kind of control through free expression of opinions presupposes a belief that the government will always take these opinions into consideration and would act accordingly. He argued: "democracy is not a matter of beliefs but guarantees" and real guarantees could be given only through "public and legal competition for power."[55] Competition for power assumes the existence of other equal political parties, which provide the possibility of alternatives in policy making. The existence of such a system of parties was considered by a majority of liberal intellectuals as the most powerful control over the arbitrary use of power. However, the official attitude to establishment of other political parties was expressed clearly enough by Dubcek in his speech in April, when he said that "discussions cannot go in the direction of whether a leading role should be played by the CP or not" but in the direction of "how to apply more efficiently the leading role of the CP."[56]

With regard to control by other political parties, the starting point of some liberals was that the CP, which held the monopoly of power, would never give up this monopoly voluntarily.[57] Vladimir Klokocka regarded opposition in every political system as a necessary part of the process of integration of society and at the same time a natural means to control political power. Despite this view, he did not consider the establishment of other political parties as realistic at that time, because one could not "introduce" opposition into society; it had to be born, and this required certain conditions.[58] Control of power was generally considered as requiring a democratic system, which is more participatory and less manipulative than an authoritarian one. The system existing in 1968 in Czechoslovakia seemed to involve an "insoluble" conflict between the monopoly of power of the CP and the changing social structure. Ivan Bystrina questioned the possibility of bringing about the democratization process through a party whose inner structure was far less democratic than the system (i.e., democratic socialist system) which was to be established.[59]

Control in the form of opposition by interest groups and organizations was, in the view of liberals, ineffective because large numbers of CP members were also members of these groups and organizations. At the same time these organizations were built on different principles than political ones.[60] It was also thought that there was too great a possibility that organizations could easily degenerate into instruments of CP policy.[61]

Another possibility which was also suggested, control by influential individuals, was denied by most of the liberals as unrealistic under the conditions of one strong ruling party, which could always use some means to suppress these people.

These more or less intellectual discussions about power and its control did not have too much practical impact on the decision-making bodies. How far they had influence on individual members of the CP leadership will be seen in the next chapter. However, they had some impact on public opinion, as will be shown at the end of this chapter. The process of democratization on the level of the political mechanism was carried out by the Party and little was done by way of establishing institutionalized control and democratic guarantees.[62]

3. The future role of the Communist Party. There were two basic conceptions of the future position of the CP in society. The first conception favoured elevating the status of other political parties to a position equal with that of the CP (usually thought of in the framework of the National Front), and consequently the establishment of choice of alternatives and the possibility of the CP's losing its dominant position. The other viewpoint accepted a "leading role" for the CP as a premise. In various

discussions, opinions were expressed about the kinds of changes inside and outside the CP that would be necessary if the Party were to become more efficient in its response to social needs, how they were felt by the majority of people, and at the same time how one might achieve voluntary consent by the majority for Party policy.[63]

The first concept, which favoured the establishment of other political parties on an equal basis, was partially built on the argument that a model of a socialist system which does not allow the existence of other parties is a Stalinist model, one actually imposed upon Czechoslovakia from abroad against the country's tradition and inclinations.[64] This argument found much support in historical studies, which stressed that the most important aspects of programs for social and political development after the Second World War were democracy and social justice, and that these programs, also accepted by the CP, did not include that aspect of the trend which developed after 1948.[65] Also, the question of merging the Social Democratic Party (the second Marxist party before 1948, which had a plank for the building of socialism in its program) with the CP was considered. It was agreed that the majority of SDP members were against fusion and that the method to achieve it was not democratic.[66]

In other words, the legitimacy of the CP as a leading party was questioned and theoretical legitimacy for re-establishing a Social Democratic Party was justified on historical grounds. Another argument questioning the legitimacy of the leading position of the CP was made by Svitak, who pointed out that the ruling position of the CP was never achieved by free and secret elections and that, therefore, there was no element of choice involved.[67] A general assumption of these arguments was the belief that democracy could be achieved only through a "free market" of ideas, competition for power, and guarantees of civic freedoms. These concepts were considered to be a valuable heritage of Western European political development, in which Bohemia had taken a part.

The second concept, that which insisted upon a leading role for the CP in society, was justified in terms of the division of the world into blocs and the fact that Czechoslovakia was a part of a socialist bloc. It was thought that the Communist Party could guarantee amicable relationship with other socialist countries, particularly with the USSR, without which it would not be realistic to hope for further continuation of the democratization process.

Progress of society, according to these opinions, was not connected as much with the existence of democracy as with the process of getting scientific knowledge about laws of social development and with the correct use of this knowledge for management of the society. In this view, the role of the CP was seen as that of "manager" and "collecter" of information, or as a center of synthesis of science and practical policy. The future role of the CP was seen in terms of producing harmony between individual and group interests and the interests of the society as a whole.[67] The most obvious assumption of this view was that it is possible to discover laws of social development and to act accordingly.

Other arguments in favour of a leading role for the CP were related to the possibility of re-establishment of the Social Democratic Party. These arguments expressed concern that the SDP might be changed into a non-Marxist party and used in the struggle against the CP, or even against socialism itself.[68] According to some theoreticians, the CP was considered to be the only guarantor of the development of socialism in the country, which was seen as an unquestionable goal of development, and they saw pluralism only in relation to proprietary interests. They usually asked what guarantees there would be, in the event of a victory of the second party, that political power would not be abused again.[69]

Much discussion was centered on the necessity of intra-Party democratization and control, which was seen by some as the first step toward a guarantee for the continuation of the process of democratization.[70] Others saw guarantees of the continuation of the democratization process/linked to changes in the Party's social and political functions and roles, and this again was to be achieved by democratization within the Party.[71] Importance was also placed upon changes in the selection of people for leading posts in the CP, because it seemed that in the existing system, people with potentially "harmful" personality traits had a much better chance of getting into these posts.[72] The leading role of the CP with its developed professional apparatus was justified by some people in terms of the argument that a modern, organized, industrial state has to have some professional apparatus.[73]

Most of these opinions involved the assumption that the process of democratization was a matter which for the time being mainly concerned the CP as a political institution and its members as Communists. Non-Party people were not referred to as equal to members of the CP. However, even democratization of the Party did not go very far in regard to official rules and provisions. Attempts to press the leadership into making some desirable changes came from several sides. For example, in June, Communists from the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University in Prague sent a resolution to the leadership demanding changes in the Party constitution. These changes included the right to resign from the membership in the Party, abolition of the Party's disciplinary rules, changes in rights of members, in electoral rules and in the work of committees of the Central Committee of the CP.[74]

These above described opinions were mostly those of political theoreticians and experts. The attitude of professional politicians on political issues, particularly members of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP, will be examined in the next chapter.

4. Representation of interests. As with the issue discussed in the previous section, the issue of representation of interests was marked by conflict between "liberal" and "conservative" positions. The chief theoretical assumption of those who argued for the institutionalized representation of interests (i.e., liberals) was that in any society the interests of citizens do not necessarily have to be identical with those of their representatives.[75] Applying this line of reasoning to the situation in Czechoslovakia, where the citizens did not have an opportunity to choose their representatives or express fully their interests, it was even more probable that those who claimed to represent or defend the interests of the society were actually furthering their own interests.[76] The question of the relationship between "socialist democracy" and representation of interests brought out the importance of elections. It was considered that democracy would prevail only if people had an opportunity "from time to time to freely elect those who govern."[77]

The Party's "Action Program" issued in April provided opportunities for expressing various opinions and interests in the framework of the socialist system. It was based on the assumption of the leading role of the CP and the belief that the CP would be able to get enough popular support for its policy. It was an attempt to increase the responsiveness of the CP to social needs, mainly through an increase in the activity of its members. However, the "Action Program" did not make any concrete provisions for institutionalized representation of various interests and for the possibility of choice between alternatives. This program was considered by non-Party members as the "minimum program", and they were afraid that it still could eventually be limited when "the new crew firmly grasped state power."[78] This point of view was probably shared by many Communists as well. For example, it was shared by such a prominent Communist theoretician as Zdenek Mlynar (a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP), who did not see the""Action Program" as the last word and who saw nothing wrong in the existence of two political parties working on the principle of opposition.[79]

New provisions for a general election, discussed in March, incorporated the idea of secrecy of elections, and it was considered desirable that the selection of candidates be made by as many people as possible.[80] However, these provisions were generally perceived as being insufficient to guarantee truly democratic elections, and it was felt that they paid little attention to popular demands.[81] The importance of institutionalizing "representation of interests" became more apparent under the circumstances of increased pressures from above, when terms like "anti-socialist", "anti-communist" and "anti-Soviet" began to be used by some politicians to silence certain liberal views.[82] These terms implied a serious threat to freedom of expression, since they were vague and undefined, and it was therefore possible to use them against any opinion opposed to official policy.

Contradictions between public interests and CP policy-making were most sharply expressed in Vaculik's "2,000 Words",[83] in which he actually denied that the Communist leadership represented the interests of the workers, despite what had been officially proclaimed. The leadership responded to this document by perceiving it as an attack on the prevailing leadership of the CP and the state.[84] This stand of the leadership was published, however, despite the fact that the publicly expressed attitudes of a vast majority of citizens agreed with Vaculik's "2,000 Words". For example, most of the vast volume of mail that was received by the publishing house of the CP newspaper Rude Pravo agreed with Vaculik.[85] Tension between these public efforts, supported by intellectuals (who often played opinion-leading roles) and official policy was the reason that from June onward worker committees were being set up for the defence of freedom of press and expression.[86] Also; open letters by workers defending freedom of speech and the press, usually signed by a few dozen people, were being sent to journals and magazines and published every week.[87] This activity developed especially after May when some deputies in the National Assembly expressed a desire "to take effective measures against newspapermen."[88]

5. Ideology. The major issues relating to ideology which came under closer scrutiny of some theoreticians were, first, "Marxist theory" or "Marxist-Leninist theory" and, second, the concept of "socialism". Marxist-Leninist theory was mainly examined as an approach and interpretation. Unorthodox discussions began under the peculiar circumstance of the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth, and led to the possibility of the direct confrontation between views being expressed in Czechoslovakia and those in the USSR. While a member of the Soviet Politburo, M. Suslov, in his speech on May 5, stressed Lenin's interpretation of the role of the proletarian dictatorship and the proletarian revolution as the "highest form of democracy",[89] Cisar, a member of the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Central Committee, pointed out in his speech on the same day how harmful it was to generalize from the experience of Soviet Communists as if it were the only valid interpretation of the Marxist thinking.[90]

Further discussions analyzed the possibility of various interpretations of Marxism, and were attempts to explain the harmful consequences of the situation in which only one interpretation of Marxism was allowed by those who had privileged positions of power.[91] It was stated that when one party or country claims to have found the authentic, correct interpretation of Marxism, this signifies the hegemony of that party or country, and this negates the notion of equality among all Communist parties and countries.[92]

There appeared also different statements of "Marxist theory". A philosopher, J. Cvekl, viewed it as one of many philosophical viewpoints which should not bring any advantages or disadvantages to one subscribing to it. He claimed that opinions and attitudes of many party members had nothing in common with Marxism; and besides many people outside the Party were seriously interested in this philosophical trend. He maintained that people should have the right to pass from one philosophical position to another without being ruined. In other words, everybody should have the right of free choice of philosophical position. In conclusion, he stated that "Marxism-Leninism" as a "state philosophy" should be removed from the Constitution.[93] In another article he considered the most valuable aspect of "Marx's method" to be its critical, revolutionary approach to existing social realities.[94]

The second issue related to ideology which was discussed intensively was the concept of "socialism". This concept was never precisely defined, and in fact had not been even by the official ideology of the past. Discussions in 1968 went mainly in the direction of explaining its possible meaning. Two major conclusions were drawn from these discussions. The first conclusion was that the Soviet concept of socialism was usually reduced to a limited number of aspects (for example, social ownership of the means of production and liquidation of exploitation[95]), which was considered far from the socialism of Marx and Engels. Selucky's interpretation of the Marxist theory of socialism was that it was not supposed to abolish everything which was typical of capitalism and bourgeois-democratic society, but that capitalism was supposed to be overcome in a positive way, which meant giving people more opportunity for self-realization. Moreover it should also mean an increase in human rights and freedom.[96]

Individual conditions and the history of the country began to be considered as the most important factors for making a model of socialism.[97] The violent interruption of the continuity of Czechoslovak development in 1948 began to be understood as a major reason for the social, political and economic crisis in the country.[98] These opinions were linked to the pre-1948 situation when "a specific Czechoslovakia way to socialism" was part of the program of the CP.[99]

The fundamental aspect of the Soviet interpretation of Marxism, i.e., the social ownership of the means of production as a basis for building socialism, was attacked by the philosopher Cvekl, who rejected any "fetishization" of ownership of the means of production on the basis that the forms of production are progressive or regressive only to the extent to which they are able to guarantee the development of a sufficient quantity of production and the realization of human abilities.[100] The attempt to remove "fetishized" terms went so far as to proclaim that "socialism has its justification as a social system only in the case that it is able to ensure that people or a nation will have more freedom and simultaneously more material development than the previous system."[101]

How far the views presented above were based upon a realistic assessment or to what degree they were unrealistic in their premises is not important for the purpose of this thesis. They are presented here for the purpose of showing a general trend in views on ideology.

6. Foreign policy. Most analyses and discussions about foreign policy were based on the assumption that it was desirable to use foreign policy as a means to further national interests, and that the interests of individual socialist countries differed, according to their specific domestic conditions.[102] It was generally believed as well that Czechoslovakian foreign policy did not function properly in this sense. For the first time since 1948 the question of sovereignty of the country was brought to the attention of the public.[103] Regarding foreign policy, it was admitted by an expert from the Foreign Ministry (Jaroslav Sedivy) that Czechoslovakian foreign policy was actually carrying

out the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.[104] Suggestions were made that the unity of the socialist bloc should be based on a genuine recognition of the specific conditions of each country to formulate and carry out independent domestic and foreign policy without the danger of being labelled "revisionist" or "nationalist".[105]

The theoretical analyses of Czechoslovakian foreign policy distinguished two major factors: foreign policy as a means for achieving national security and foreign policy as a means for more effective economic and social development. The former aspect was considered to be a question for military agreement, and discussions about the future foreign policy did not speculate upon the possibility of weakening the alliance with the USSR and other socialist countries. However, the necessity of equality and non-interference was considered fundamental in such relationships.[106] Otherwise this aspect did not seem to have priority in importance due to the relaxation of international tensions in comparison with the previous decade. The second aspect, foreign policy as a means for more effective economic and social development, involved discussions about specific conditions in each socialist country. The major point was that besides traditional cultural, political and economic ties which Czechoslovakia had with Western Europe in the past, it could still gain more from Western Europe than from Eastern Europe at that particular time in terms of her specific economic, cultural and political needs.[107]

Not only did the theoretical discussions deal with Czechoslovakian foreign policy from the standpoint of her national interests, but the "Action Program" of the CP stressed the importance of initiative in Czechoslovakian foreign policy and the necessity to concentrate more on an active "European policy" as well as the need to develop good relations with all nations, particularly with West Germany.[108]

As in all issues, practical political provisions concerning foreign policy were not closely related to the above-mentioned suggestions. However, some steps were made in the direction of improving relations with West Germany and Austria. For example, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jiri Hajek, met his counterpart from Austria, K. Waldheim, in June.[109] More important than the result of the negotiations (which concerned the property of some Austrian citizens in Czechoslovakia) was probably the fact that this was the first time since 1948 that a Czechoslovakian Minister of Foreign Affairs carried on discussions with a Minister of Foreign Affairs of a West European country.[110]

In order to analyze more thoroughly the opinions and trends present in Czechoslovakia in 1968, it is instructive to discuss the findings of two studies of public opinion conducted in that year. In this way an attempt will be made to determine the probable influence of the information flowing through the channels of communication upon the public.

In June, when a survey of 38,000 readers of the official CP newspaper, Rude Pravo,[111] was conducted there had been intense discussions of political changes in the country[112] for several months in the various media. The bias that might appear to enter into the result of the survey is less than would seem to be the case at first glance because the opinions of Communist Party members and non-Party people were analyzed separately. This was also done with "more educated" and "less educated" respondents. More educated refers to those with secondary and post-secondary education; less educated means those whose schooling did not extend so far.[113] The fact that respondents were categorized and analyzed separately was important because a disproportionate number of respondents were highly educated persons and educated members of the CP.[114] Three questions from this newspaper poll are most relevant to the political issues discussed earlier in this thesis.

The first question was whether the press, radio and television were discussing political matters which were not within their area of competence.[115] As Table 1 shows, less well-educated Party members were much more inclined to criticize the mass media for overstepping their "proper" role, i.e., discussing "undesirable" ideas. The highest agreement with media policy is given by better educated non-Party people (91%), and since non-Party people are in the majority among the population, this is an important finding. The difference in the level of agreement (with the media policy) between better and lower educated Party members is 18% and between higher and lower educated non-Party members is 14%. Thus one could say that education (and one can assume, level of information as well) is a prerequisite for the acceptance of more unorthodox ideas.

TABLE 1

EVALUATION OF MEDIA REPORTING

Evaluation	CP Members		Non-Party People	
	Lower Educated	Higher Educated	Lower Educated	Higher Educated
Agree (Media going too far)	45%	28%	19%	8%
Uncertain	3%	2%	4%	1%
Disagree (Media not going too far)	52%	70%	77%	91%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The second question was whether the new political system should allow for the influence on political decision-making by various groups and strata in the society through free speech. The choice of response to this question was worded so as to determine the proportion of respondents who felt (a) that this state of "democratic pluralism" was desirable, (b) that this system was not only desirable but could be expected to be realized in the near future, and (c) this system to be desirable and also that this state of affairs already existed.

TABLE 2[116]

ATTITUDES CONCERNING INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS INTERESTS UPON DECISION-MAKING

	Party Members		Non-CP People	
	Lower Educated	Higher Educated	Lower Educated	Higher Educated
Agree--democratic pluralism desirable	82%	92%	91%	94%
Agree--democratic pluralism desirable and will be realized	76%	78%	82%	73%
Agree--democratic pluralism desirable and it already exists	53%	46%	49%	31%

The interpretation of the second Table indicates that the majority of the population was in favour of the new political system based on representation of various interests. However, a slight majority of lower educated Party members (53%) considered that the political system (as of June 1968) was already working well through influence of various interests in the society. Other categories were more critical of the existing political situation and less willing to accept the existing level of liberalization as sufficient.[117]

The third question asked the views of the respondents as to what would be the best guarantee of the continuation of democratization in the country. They were asked to rank the five alternatives in order of importance. Table 3 presents the five possibilities of what kind of guarantees would be sufficient or less sufficient for the establishment of democracy. It is not surprising to find out that the majority of the lower educated Party members (66%) pointed to intra-Party democracy as the main guarantee of democracy, while the higher educated non-Party members pointed out the possibility of choice among more political parties as the major guarantee of democracy (89%).

It would be interesting to know what proportion of lower educated and higher educated Party members placed the possibility of choice among political parties as the major guarantee of democracy. However, from the available data this question cannot be answered. One can say that a large majority of non-Party people wished to have a system in which a choice between several parties was possible (since we know from Table 2 that the vast majority of the population, particularly non-Party members, were in favour of a democratic system).

TABLE 3[118]

RANKING OF STEPS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO GUARANTEE DEMOCRACY

(Percentage of respondents in relevant category for each ranking is included in parentheses.)

Guarantee of Democracy	CP Members		Non-CP People	
	Lower Educated	Higher Educated	Lower Educated	Higher Educated
Intra-Party democracy is sufficient guarantee	1 (66%)	1 (45%)	4 (28%)	4 (16%)
Freedom of expression by public and media is sufficient guarantee	2 (63%)	2 (61%)	2 (66%)	2 (45%)
Free development of social and interest groups is sufficient guarantee (e.g., Trade Un., Youth org.)	3 (62%)	5 (48%)	5 (39%)	5 (22%)
Revitalization of political parties of the National Front sufficient guarantee	5 (59%)	4 (53%)	3 (68%)	3 (45%
Choice among more political parties in addition to those of the National Front sufficient guarantee	4 (54%)	3 (57%)	1 (91%)	1 (89%)

The interesting point that stands out from these Tables, primarily from the first two, is that there was a considerable difference between the opinions of the more educated Party members and their less educated Party comrades. Indeed, the differences in opinions within the Party were sometimes greater than those between educated Party members and non-Party respondents.

Generally, it can be said that at least a certain kind of knowledge, which was assumed in order to answer these and other questions in the questionnaire meaningfully can be linked to the information which had already been flowing through the channels of communication for several months. Since a majority of respondents (considered as representative of the whole population) agreed with the policy of the mass media, and since the majority of respondents were basically in favour of development of democratic pluralism in the country, it can be supposed that there was a strong connection between unorthodox ideas expressed through channels of communication and attitudes of the population.

This hypothesis that there was some degree of influence of unorthodox ideas expressed through the channels of communication on public opinion can be partially supported by the findings of another investigation (made in March) of the opinions of 1,800 male students in their fourth year of university studies. In the questionnaire prepared for this sampling there were five possible answers to the question, "Whose political opinions do you respect most?" The answers appeared in the following order:[119]

1.	Friends	43%
2.	Teachers	42%
3.	Other political actors	34%
4.	Parents	29%
5.	Official leading political personalities	16%

For the purpose at hand the third item ("other political actors") is the most relevant one. To respect somebody's opinion supposes that one knows it, and considering the first two items as a form of personal, face-to-face communication, it is most probable that "other political actors" were expressing their views through a channel of communication (e.g., press, radio, television, meeting). If we suppose a high degree of correlation between "respect" and "influence", it can be hypothesized that there was a considerable degree of influence through the channels of communication upon some elements of the population. Unfortunately a sample of university students cannot be taken as representative of the whole population. Findings of this study also show clearly that at least for some part of the population, personal, face-to-face communication probably had greater importance in forming opinions than information coming from the channels of communication. On the other hand it could be hypothesized that feedback for opinions of "friends" and "teachers" came mostly from the mass media.

To conclude this chapter, the most important findings may be summarized here as they relate to discussion of the channels of communication, and the information flowing through them.

The significance of the channels of communication with regard to the liberal development in Czechoslovakia in 1968 is not linked so much to changes of structure of the "formal" channels as to significance of changes in the "substructure" of these channels and to a change in their functions. The command structure, important in the pre-1968 period for the whole social system, including the communication system, "ceased to exist", and existing channels of communication opened up to information coming not from one predominant centre as in the former period, but from various sources. These channels changed their function; they ceased to be a "transmission belt" between the leadership and the population, and began to perform the function of an "information exchange" for all strata of the population.

However, this change in the function of the channels of communication would not have been sufficient for the channels to serve as a major means of political liberalization in the country if the content of information flowing through the channels did not change. Actually, the content was what played a very significant role in policy making in the sense of bringing various information, opinions and suggestions, relevant to such a degree to political developments that it was able to exercise a significant motivating influence in most segments of the population, including the leadership. This change in the content of information flowing through the channels of communication is directly linked to the activity of politically involved intellectuals and experts, whose efforts, expended for at least a decade, culminated in 1968.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Z. Suda, The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Baltimore, The John S. Hopkins Press, 1969). These and some other data precede the text of the book.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Rude Pravo, July 30, 1968.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Rude Pravo, June 26, 1968.

[7] Sbirka Zakonu, Decree No. 119/1966, section 5.

[8] G. Golan, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 289.

[9] Rude Pravo, July 20, 1968.

[10] Rude Pravo, March 15, 1968.

[11] Rude Pravo, July 20, 1968.

[12] Rude Pravo, March 15, 1968.

[13] Rude Pravo, March 17, and March 19, 1968.

[14] Rude Pravo, February 4, 1968.

[15] Literarni Listy, I (No. 12, May 16, 1968).

[16] Literarni Listy, I (No. 6, April 4, 1968).

[17] Literarni Listy, I (No. 7, April 2, 1968).

[18] Rude Pravo, March 24, 1968.

[19] Rude Pravo, June 25, 1968.

[20] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 289.

[21] MY 68, V (June, 1968), p. 33.

[22] Literarni Listy, I (No. 6, April 4, 1968).

[23] Literarni Listy, I (No. 6, April 4, 1968).

[24] Golan, The Czechoslovak, p. 289.

[25] B. W. Jancar, *Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power* (New York: Praegar Publishers, 1971).

[26] J. F. Triska, "Political Change in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Intervention:; in I. W. Zartmen, ed., *Czechoslovakia:Intervention and Impact* (New York, New York University Press, 1970), p.1.

[27] E. B. Hoffman, *Ideological Administration in the Soviet Union, 1959-1963: A Study of the Communications Behavior of the Communist Party* (Indiana University, unpublished, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1967), p. 106.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[29] J. Tomasek, *Nova Mysl*, XII (February, 1968).

[30] *Rude Pravo*, February 8, 1968.

[31] M. Kolacek, "O vedouci uloze strany", *Zivot Strany* (No. 12, May, 1968), p. 6.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

[33] *Rude Pravo*, March 10, 1968.

[34] *Rude Pravo*, March 18, 1968.

[35] *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 18, June 28, 1968).

[36] A. Korbonski, "Bureaucracy and Interest Groups in Communist Societies: The Case of Czechoslovakia", *Studies in Comparative Communism*, IV (January, 1971), pp. 57-79.

[37] *Student*, IV (April 3, 1968), p. 5.

[38] *Student*, IV (April 10, 1968), p. 5. There were probably two reasons for this decrease. It was not politically advantageous to be a member of these parties, and the parties actually were not allowed to take new members.

[39] *Student*, IV (April 3, and April 10, 1968).

[40] J. Pomahac, "Koketovani s duverou", *Rude Pravo*, June 14, 1968.

[41] *Rude Pravo*, June 9, 1968.

[42] Golan, *The Czechoslovak*, pp. 36-37.

[43] M. Sucky, "Svoboda kriticismu a rozvoj marxiske teorie", *Otazky Marxisticke Filosofie*, XIX (No. 3, 1964), pp. 409-414.

[44] M. Lakatos, *Pravda* (Bratislava), April 1, 1968.

[45] Jankar, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 26.

[46] J. Cvekl, "Jaky model socialismu", *Nova Mysl*, XII (No. 8, 1968), pp. 1011-1020.

[47] Z. Mlynar, "Dnesni situace a system", *Rude Pravo*, March 14, 1968.

[48] Cvekl, "Jaky model socialismu".

[49] Golan, *The Czechoslovak*, p. 311.

[50] V. Klokocka, "Renesance moci", *Literarni Listy*, I (no. 4, April 5, 1967).

[51] O. Sik, "O strane vcera a dnes", *Zivot Strany* (No. 17, August, 1968).

[52] Klocka, "Renesance Moci".

[53] M. Lakatos, *Pravda* (Bratislava), April 1, 1968.

[54] J. Strinka, *Kulturny Zivot* (November 26, 1965), quoted from Golan, *The Czechoslovak*, p. 156.

[55] V. Havel, "Na tema opozice", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 6, April 19, 1968).

[56] A. Dubcek, *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 9, April 25, 1968).

[57] A. J. Liehm, "Tak vazne: Co konkretne?", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 16, June 13, 1968).

[58] Klokocka, "Renesance moci".

[59] I. Bystrina, "Do dalsiho kola", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 16, June 13, 1968).

[60] Havel, "Na tema opozice".

[61] J. Vlk, "Kontrola moci", *Student*, IV (May, 1968).

[62] M. Jodl, "Pokus o ohlednuti", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 14, May 30, 1968).

[63] F. Samalik, "Horke leto nebo okurkova sezona", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 20, July 2, 1968).

[64] M. Lakatos, "Moznosti Narodni Fronty", Literarni Listy, I (No. 4, April 5, 1968).

[65] S. Zamecnik, "Komunisticak otazka Narodni Fronty v ceskych zemich", Historie a vojenstvi (No. 2, 1968).

[66] J. Nedved, "Cesta ke slouceni Socialni Demokracie s Komunistickou stranou v r. 1948", Rozpravy Ceskoslovenske Akademie Ved, Rada spol. ved. (No. 8, 1968), p. 78. See also a letter of Z. Kral to the President, Chairman of the National Assembly, Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Front, and the First Secretary of the Presidium of the Central Committee about the way that unification of the SDP with the CP was realized, Student, IV (May 22, 1968).

[67] I. Svitak, "Dusledky slov", Literarni Listy, I (No. 21, July 18, 1968).

[68] J. Kolar, "Postaveni a uloha strany v soucasne spolecnosti", Nova Mysl, XII (January, 1968), pp. 17-25.

[69] S. Posusta, "Potrebuje nas demokraticky socialism dve marxistice strany?", Rude Pravo, June 26, 1968.

[70] K. Ondris, "Politicky Pluralism", Zivot Strany (No. 12, 1968), pp. 24-28.

[71] E. Mandler, "Se stranou proti strane?", Student, IV (May, 1968), pp. 1-5.

[72] O. Sik, "O strane vcera a dnes".

[73] Ibid.

[74] Z. Sulc, "Jake vychodisko z nynejsi krize?", Rude Pravo, June 14, 1968.

[75] Literarni Listy, I (No. 21, July 18, 1968).

[76] Klokocka, "Renezance moci".

[77] O. Kym, "Informace obema smery", Literarni Listy, I (No. 3, March 14, 1968).

[78] Havel, "Na tema opzice".

[79] I. Svitak, "Tluceni hlavou o zed", Student, IV (April 10, 1968).

[80] Z. Mlynar, "K demokraticke politicke organizaci spolecnosti", Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968).

[81] *Rude Pravo*, March 13, 1968.

[82] "Otevreny dopis V. Skodovi", *MY 68*, V (April, 1968).

[83] Dalimil, *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 17, June 27, 1968).

[84] L. Vaculik, "2,000 Words", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 18, June 27, 1968).

[85] "Stanovisko UV KSC", *Rude Pravo*, June 29, 1968.

[86] *Rude Pravo*, July 6, 1968.

[87] *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 16, June 13, 1968).

[88] *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 17, June 20, 1968).

[89] *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 13, May 23, 1968).

[90] M. Suslov, Speech in the Kremlin on May 5, 1968, *Rude Pravo*, May 6, 1968.

[91] C. Cisar, *Rude Pravo*, May 6, 1968.

[92] I. Svitak, "Smysl Marxismu", *Student*, IV (May 15, 1968).

[93] R. Selucky, "Alternativy socialistickeho vyvoje", *Nova Mysl*, XII (August, 1968), pp. 1021-1027.

[94] J. Cvekl, "O budoucnosti nasi filosofie", *Rude Pravo*, June 8, 1968.

[95] J. Cvekl, "Meditace nad dilem Karla Marxe", *Nova Mysl*, XII (May, 1968), pp. 539-548.

[96] D. Pokorny, "O privlastcich a vetach vedlejsich", Literarni Listy, I (No. 7, April 12, 1968).

[97] Selucky, "Alternativy".

[98] Pokorny, "O privlastcich".

[99] M. Reiman, "Demokraticky socialismus", *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 20, July 2, 1968).

[100] *Ibid*.

[101] Cvekl, "Jaky model socialismu?"

[102] A. J. Liehm, "Klidna revoluce v Ceskoslovensku", *Swiss Gazette* (january 31, 1968), quoted from *Literarni Listy*, I (No. 1, March 1, 1968).

[103] V. Kotyk, "K problematice vzatahu socialistickych zemi", Nova Mysl, XII (July, 1968), pp. 815-825.

[104] E. Menert, "Uvaha nad uhelnym kamenem", Literarni Listy, I (No. 19, July 4, 1968).

[105] J. Sedivy, "A co zahranicni politika?", Literarni Listy, I (No. 8, April 18, 1968).

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] "Action Program", Rude Pravo, April 10, 1968.

[110] Rude Pravo, June 26, 1968.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid. These 38,000 represent those who responded to the newspaper's questionnaire.

[113] See above section of this chapter, where documentation of the media coverage of political issues is provided.

[114] Rude Pravo, June 26, 1968.

[115] Ibid.

[116] The actual question was: "Some people say that the press, radio and television are assuming the right to discuss issues about which they have no particular competence. Do you agree, disagree, or uncertain?"

[117] Ibid. Of the 38,000 respondents, 61% were of higher education and 39% had less than secondary education. Of the total respondents, 62% were CP members and 38% non-Party people. While the data reveal that the analysis separated Party members and non-members respectively into higher and lower educational categories, the number of persons in each educational bracket based on membership was unfortunately not indicated.

[118] Ibid. This table is confusing according to North American standards; however, to help to read it, the example from the first column, the first top number and the ranking will be explained. It indicated that 66% of lower educated CP members placed intraparty democracy in the first place as a sufficient guarantee of democracy.

[119] J. Ondrouch, "Studenti o sobe", Student, IV (March 27, 1968).

CHAPTER IV

LEADERSHIP AND INFORMATION

As stated in the previous chapter, information which flowed through the channels of communication probably influenced not only public opinion but also some of the high decision-making officials. This chapter will examine the political views held by members of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee, the purpose being to demonstrate that some of the political leaders drew at least some of their ideas from "unorthodox" intellectuals. That there was a connection between the views of intellectuals and the attitudes of some professional politicians, is indicated by the findings of F. M. Barnard. For example, he states that in the period before 1968 there were already effective pressures upon the leadership which "came neither from the party leadership nor from the party as a whole, but from factions and individuals who could make their influence felt by the importance of their professional expertise or by their access to the communication media."[1] The most precise way to prove or disprove this hypothesis would be to conduct an opinion survey of these members. However, since, for obvious reasons, this is not possible, other methods will hopefully provide some support of the stated position.

Generally, the investigation will be based on speeches and articles of the members of the Presidium and Secretariat between January and August 1968. Three factors will be considered as relevant. First, the time will be taken into consideration. In concrete terms, the work will seek to answer the question whether important political issues began to be discussed first by intellectuals or by professional politicians. Second, statements of politicians which can be identified as reactions to views expressed by intellectuals will be pointed out. Third, the opinions of politicians will be followed briefly during the whole period and the similarity with "unorthodox" ideas of intellectuals will be examined.

It will be useful to look at the attitude of members of the highest Party body prior to 1968, on the occasions when unorthodox ideas about the system were expressed publicly. Whatever their private and unexpressed opinions, members of the leadership generally were not willing to take the consequences of eventually defending persons who expressed ideas in public which were considered to be dangerous by other members of the leadership (especially by Novotny and the people around him). To give one example, in June 1967, at the Writers' Congress, some radical ideas were expressed before the public (though a very limited one one). It does not seem that any member of the leadership group being studied made any real effort to defend those writers, who had to face the consequences of expressing their thoughts. The same situation appears to have occured with the students' demonstration in the autumn of 1967, and again with the suppression of the most radical literary magazine, Literarni noviny.

This cautious stance of the leaders might have resulted from party discipline; certainly it does not mean that there was any substantive consensus among the occupants of the highest Party posts. Actually the opposite was the case,[3] for there were various factions among the high Party officials, and some of them had their own ideas about the necessity of making changes in the existing political system. However, these "dissatisfied" members considered changes in the Party to be the most important, and these reforms were seen as a means of bringing about efficiency in Party operations which would eventually lead to broader social and political reforms in Czechoslovakia. These measures were seen largely as "internal Party matters." Intellectuals and other dissatisfied citizens were not supposed to interfere with political matters which were considered within the realm of Party competence.

Still, in the beginning of the liberalization period the possibility of improving society was seen by professional politicians as originating in the improvement of Party functioning. These same politicians believed that the first step toward improvement would be the replacement of certain key figures in the party and the creation of more open relationships among members of the Presidium the Secretariat and the Central Committee (primarily in the sense that the Central Committee was to be informed about all matters discussed in the Presidium and Secretariat). This demand was based on the fact that the Presidium and the Secretariat often did not inform the Central Committee properly about matters under discussion. Moreover, materials for the proceedings were usually distributed to the members of the Central Committee only immediately prior to the meetings, leaving insufficient time to read them.[4]

Thus, the attention of the dissatisfied members in high Party posts was on Party organization and policy; changes which were considered essential if the Party's "leading role" in society was to be improved. Probably the major internal change in the Party during the first few months after January could be described in terms of improved communication among the several high Party institutions. There are only a few speeches which were made by high Party functionaries between January and the beginning of March, as compared to the later period, and fewer of them expressed unorthodox ideas about the future political development of the country or responded to articles about the political system published by intellectuals in magazines and journals. An exception was Zdenek Mlynar, a progressive member of the Secretariat, who was probably the first to publish his ideas regarding the necessity of changing the political system. In his first article at that time, he did not go beyond a general discussion of the danger of the over-concentration of power (he did not speak in terms of "monopoly of power"). He suggested the necessity of introducing a healthy interrelationship between the Party, Government, organizations, and individuals. In his view, individuals should enjoy basic rights which would enable them to express their interests.[5] However, at this time (February) he did not present any other suggestion as to how decentralization of power could be realized under the conditions of one ruling party and an authoritarian political system.

It is instructive to follow changes in his opinions, for he later went so far as to accept the possibility of two political parties functioning on the basis of opposition.[6] In the middle of March he published an article in which he stated that the main thing was to "improve the existing system".[7] At the same time he expressed concern about the possibility that the existing system "could show itself to be incapable of responding to interests and demands of the society and that this society would begin to produce people who would demand removing this system and its replacement by a different one."[8] Two weeks later he published another article in which he wrote about the establishment of other political parties as a realistic means of solving relations between party members and non-members.[9] He did not explain the reasons for his change of view, although he did state that "the need of citizens to organize themselves in political parties was altogether forgotten."[10] He did not say by whom these needs were forgotten, but presumably he meant the CP leadership, because discussions mentioning other political parties in the country had been going on in the press for at least a few weeks. It seems probable that these discussions were influential in changing his opinions. Mlynar developed his ideas in more concrete terms a month later in another extensive article, where he discussed "a new political system which must be established."[11]

The following is an illustration which provides further support for the hypothesis that some members at least partially developed their ideas and attitudes under the influence of pressures coming from society and from prominent intellectuals, who, one can assume, were often articulating trends existing in the politically active segment of the population. Josef Smrkovsky said at the meeting of the Central Committee in the beginning of April that "it is necessary to make possible the free establishment of new organizations and interest groups, and to give them room, which they demand for their activity."[12]

It seems that the most progressive members of the leadership felt a constant lack of knowledge about the situation in society. Upon examining their early speeches in March and April, one theme appears in many forms.

Generally, it is a demand for analysis of the existing political and social system and for outlining the possibilities for future development. For example, Smrkovsky called for a "precise diagnosis of the society";[13] Dubcek called for an "accurate analysis of the past twenty years."[14] The same issue was raised at a meeting of the Central Committee in the beginning of June by Sik, a member of the Central Committee.[15]

Usually, a free exchange of ideas was considered to be the most important way of obtaining the maximum amount of information, and the channels of communication were seen by most progressives as a means through which illumination and crystallization of ideas could be achieved and alternatives for solving problems determined.[16]

Thus, it seems that the original aim of the liberal members of high Party bodies was to make changes inside the Party, especially the replacement of functionaries in high Party posts. This was probably seen as a means of improving the work of the Party, which was considered to be a prerequisite for solving political and social problems in society. It does not seem that there was at the beginning any set of comprehensive ideas in the minds of these people as to how, in concrete terms, the improvement of society was going to be achieved. However, it should be noted in this regard that an improvement in the information system was considered to be very important. In other words, with the exception of sketches for economic reforms, probably no "plan" for necessary changes had developed in the minds of these people. Therefore, it can be supposed that their opinions and activity were to a very great extent dependent on outside pressures, particularly from intellectuals and flourishing interest groups. This hypothesis could be supported not only by the evidence mentioned above, but also by statements of some members of the Presidium and Secretariat. For example, Josef Spacek proclaimed in the middle of March that "they themselves", i.e., members of all three high Party bodies, "were not aware how fast new policy of the CP would be developing."[17] Smrkovsky said at the beginning of June that varied activity was developing in society which "we were not even able to imagine in February."[18]

At this point, it would be reasonable to ask what factors were involved in shaping the opinions and attitudes of the members under investigation here to political developments in the country during the liberalization period. The major hypothesis regarding the opinions of members of the leadership is that ideas presented through channels of communication in some way influenced them. Since unorthodox opinions originated among the intellectuals, especially in the beginning, it is hypothesized that there is a connection between the ideas of unorthodox intellectuals and those of the leadership. This does not mean that these leaders did not develop any of their own conceptions and opinions about future developments in the country; in reality, it seems that over time a considerable number of differences developed between their ideas and the "pressures from below", and the fact that not very many of those efforts which flowed from below were formulated into legal provisions is one indication of this situation. Also the slowness with which all new laws were being established could be taken as an indication of differences between "demands" from below (generally for the establishment of a democratic system) and the intentions of official policy makers.

Therefore, it is assumed that some opinions and activities of all the members studied can be related to pressures from below, particularly to the intellectuals' opinions, expressed through the channels of communication. The responses of the leaders vary; however, the basic division into "liberal" and "conservative" subgroups can be seen quite clearly. One-hundred-twenty speeches and articles (from January to August) of twenty-two members and candidates of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee who held office between April 4th and August 20th, were examined in regard to the opinions expressed in them. The number of speeches and articles varies for each person, anywhere from one to thirty-six. Only articles published in major papers were considered.

The six major political issues discussed in the previous chapter will be used again in relation to classifying opinions of the leading members of the CP.

1. The political system as a whole. The professed aim of the leadership was to establish a political system in the form of "socialist democracy". The major aspect related to the political system as a whole which was under intensive public discussion was whether to have one "leading" party or more than one party, each of equal status. This issue, whether to have a one-party system or a multi-party system, did not produce much controversy among members of the leadership. All but one (Mlynar) accepted the idea of a one party system as the only realistic possibility under conditions existing at that time. This attitude was based not only on considerations of domestic and international conditions but also--at least for some members--on the belief that the CP would be able to create a program acceptable to a majority of the population, and that it would be able to get voluntary support from the majority of citizens.[19]

Mlynar, as mentioned above, presented an exception to this rule, for he did not see any contradiction between the existence of a socialist political system and the existence of competitive political parties. However, he did not specify whether he included the antisocialist opposition as well. He was in favour of building a "new political system" rather than improving the old one.[20]

It does not seem that any discussions of the possibility of establishing a pluralistic system based on competitive parties impressed members of the leadership very much. The existence of "equal" parties in the framework of the National Front was a different question, discussed in the previous chapter. Some members believed that this equality could be established and could work if the relative size of the parties' membership and professional apparatus were taken into consideration. In fact, the possibility of re-establishing the Social Democratic Party was generally considered by these members to be a threat. It is interesting to note that "the record of the meetings and deliberations which took place between the Social Democrat leaders and the Communists, primarily Smrkovsky, Kriegel and Indra, was never made public for the obvious reason that even such progressive Communists as Kriegel were against it."[22]

2. Power and its control. Concentration of power was generally considered to be harmful, and a desire was expressed for the creation of "mechanisms" which would enable mutual control of political institutions.[23] One member pointed out that the leading position of the CP should not be included in the Constitution because it would result in a situation wherein the CP would not have to make an

effort to retain power through popular support, and consequently this situation could lead to the abuse of power.[24] Regarding the control of power, legal guarantees of civil rights and freedoms were considered by many as fundamental for the protection of citizens. Freedom of expression was considered by some as one of the most important guarantees of control of power.[25] Also intraparty democracy was often considered a guarantee against possible abuses of power.

If nothing else, the acceptance of the concept of "control of power" by some members of the leadership seems to have been a new phemenon in their language. The point is underlined when it is remembered that new provisions for "more democratic" elections, general as well as in the Party, were being prepared.

3. The future role of the CP. The leading role of the CP was not questioned by the vast majority of the leaders; however, much thought was given to the necessity of changing Party functions and methods of work in the direction of creating responsiveness to public interests. The necessity of introducing stable intraparty democracy was particularly stressed. Some members considered this principle, and the principle of free expression of opinions, to be a possible substitute for the existence of an opposition party.[26] Consequently, the centralization and bureaucratization of the CP was considered by the majority of

these members as a negative phenomenon which had to be ameliorated if the Party was to be able to take on new roles.[27]

New functions of the Party were usually related to its role in the framework of "socialist democracy" (of which an official definition was never created) where equal opportunity for other social and political organizations to express their interests and to influence policy and decision-making was to be established.

With regard to internal Party changes, the "quality" of people in professional Party functions was stressed as an extremely important aspect. For the purpose of enabling a thorough renovation of professional Party cadres, the majority of liberals were in favour of changes in the electoral law in the direction of its democratization. Secrecy of election and the possibility of choice among a few candidates was the minimum demand from the majority of them.[28]

What seems to be new in these considerations is the fact that the CP leadership did not repeat phrases from the pre-1968 period, to the effect that the CP automatically served the interests of the majority of the people (working class), and that it admitted the existence of various interests in society, which the CP would have to know, Acting in harmony with the interests of the majority of the population was considered by some as the basic condition of a new Party program.[29]

The speeches which could be labelled as conservative were concentrated mainly on "achievements" of the CP during the previous twenty years. They always stressed the necessity to "intensify" the role of the CP,[30] mainly in relation to the conservatives' concern that "the liberal development raised the possibility of going back to the bourgeois political system in the near future.[31]

4. Representation of interests. The representation of interests was considered mainly in relation to the possibility of the free expression of various interests. It was assumed that any groupings created on the basis of interests would be given sufficient scope to exercise their influence on policy making. Some of the members were in favour of giving status to social organizations and other political parties (in the framework of the National Front)[32] equal to that of the CP. The need for a new electoral system, more democratic in the sense that it would enable the election of representatives from various social and mass organizations as well as from parties, was often expressed. At the same time some other democratic aspects of elections were stressed as desirable.[33] Inconsistency of some views can be partially illustrated by the following example. At a meeting for "questions and answers" in Marianske Lazne, Jan Piller said that the Central Committee of the CP

"requires" that non-Party members be "accepted" into the Government.[34]

Conservatives usually did not perceive social organizations and interest groups in relation to an institutionalized representation of interests.

5. Ideology. A majority of the members of the leadership did not refer in a direct way to ideology. The most comprehensive views which were published by a member of the leadership were those of Cisar, which were presented in detail in the previous chapter. His effort to separate Marxism from Leninism, and to defend the right of various interpretations of Marxism, was made mainly for the purpose of justifying the "Czechoslovak road to socialism". The major concern of his theory (as well as others) was that the different conditions of each country building socialism should not be ignored. This view was also held by some other liberals. Four members in particular thought that socialism should be built according to the social, economic and historical conditions, as well as the national interests of each country.[35]

Cisar went so far as to suggest in May that the Party abandon not only its monopoly on decision-making but also its monopoly on ideology. "As in the political sphere so too in the ideological, the Party should be prepared to compete with non-communist, Marxist and even non-Marxist views."[36]

6. Foreign policy. Official views concerning foreign policy were expressed in the "Action Program".[37] A new aspect of foreign policy was an emphasis on the development of relationships with Western democratic countries, according to the economic and cultural needs of Czechoslovakia. This view was repeated many times by liberals. In relation to other socialist countries, the principle of equality, mutual respect, and non-interference in domestic matters was stressed.[38]

Conservatives did not discuss this issue publicly, and they usually limited themselves to phrases such as "strengthening friendship" with the USSR and other socialist countries.

To summarize the attitudes of liberals and conservatives to the six basic political issues, it can be said that liberals (altogether thirteen) did not ignore most issues of political development which were discussed in public and which were the center of public attention. Their individual attitudes differed on these issues, but generally they were in favour of changes being made and to a considerable degree they responded positively to pressures from below. However, it seems that political developments in Czechoslovakia were taking directions beyond their expectations and probably their willingness to accept them completely. Consequently their attitudes changed over time due to domestic conditions as well as international pressures. After the end of May there was a certain decline in the degree of their "radicalism", mainly because of pressures from the Soviet Union. By July the leadership concentrated more on "smoothing" relations with other socialist countries, particularly the USSR, than on the domestic development of "socialist democracy". Smrkovsky mentioned this fact in his speech on July 22, 1968, noting that it was impossible to discuss openly some problems which existed between Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries.[39]

Conservatives (altogether nine) kept themselves in the background more than the liberals. In their public performances they generally touched as little as possible upon those political issues which were the center of the intellectuals' discussions and public attention. They made considerably fewer speeches, and they concentrated mostly on a defence of the past policy of the CP as a whole, considering failures of the past as the result of mistaken policies of individuals in top leadership ranks. It also seems that they were frustrated by the possibility of a discontinuity of the Party role in the future, and probably they felt personally threatened in their posts by political developments in 1968.

Considering the role of the channels of communication and related information in the liberalization movement, the picture would not be complete if some attention was not given to the attitudes of members of the leadership to the channels of communication, particularly to the mass media.

The attitudes of conservative members were unambiguous from the beginning, in that they did not see a positive role for open channels of political communication. Most unorthodox views were considered by them to be "dangerous" to socialism and to the position of the CP. The most common expression of these members was the phrase "antisocialist forces", which, according to some, had organized themselves to foster antisocialist activity.[40] According to others, such persons abused freedom of speech and press.[41] One member went so far as to proclaim, at a meeting of the Central Committee in the beginning of June, that "articles in various newspapers are only confusing people."[42]

The attitude of liberals to the channels of communication was more complicated. Until the end of April, it was very positive, and a majority of these leaders opposed opinions of the conservatives. Dubcek expressed disbelief that freedom of speech, including criticism of CP work in the past, would ever be used by "antisocialist forces" against the Party.[43] Some liberals rejected accusations of the conservatives to the effect that tensions in the country were being initiated by the activity of the press, radio and television; and one of them argued that the channels of communication brought to public awareness only that which already existed in society, but about which people were prohibited to talk.[44] Until May, the bulk of the liberals considered it important to leave maximum scope for the exchange of information. Open discussion about existing problems was generally considered to be the first step toward finding ways out of social, political and economic crises. For example, Cisar stressed at the April 17th meeting with newspapermen that the "information system should have a specific autonomous position in society," and that "newspapermen are able to solve important tasks of their work, and they should be responsible for the quality and accuracy of their work."[45] However, after the end of May, fewer liberal aspects appeared in the speeches and articles of these members. Some of them expressed dislike over those views of people who were trying to "discredit" the whole past work of the CP, and they refused to countenance any views which they thought might lead to a power struggle.[46]

An evaluative article about the role of the press in the post-January period was published by Cisar at the end of May.[47] He appreciated the role of the press in discovering failures and deformations in the past, and its role in the democratization of life. However, he considered overly critical articles about Communist functionaries as influencing too much public opinion and he asked the press to be serious and responsible. He appreciated the establishment of press conferences and advisory meetings with the leading members of the CP, where editors received confidential information for their work. In May other members, Smrkovsky[48] and Spacek,[49] cautioned the mass media regarding information being published.

Dubcek, at the Central Committee meeting (May 29 - June 2), "called upon Communists in the media to remember their responsibilities," and he warned them that the "media belonged to the state and could not be used to disseminate subjective views."[50] At the same meeting it was announced by Cernik that the media were to present official information and views "without polemical commentaries, and program boards would supervise broadcasting."[51] Half of the membership of these program boards was supposed to consist of representatives of the National Front and the government.[52] Cernik also suggested that the influence of the Government over the mass media should be increased by regular contacts between members of the government and leading members of these institutions. He also mentioned that intra-Party matters should not be discussed publicly, because it threatened the unity of the Party.[53]

It does not seem that pressures from the outside were the only reason for the considerable change in attitudes of the members of the leadership to the channels of communication, particularly the mass media. The evidence for this statement can be seen in the attitude of Simon, who did not share his colleagues' opinions about the mass media, and at the meeting of the Central Committee (May 29 - June 2) he did not waver in his support for free press, radio and television.[54]

It seems that sometimes the opinions of these members were not completely consistent and were probably changing according to the international situation. For example, Cisar at the meeting of the Czech National Council on July 31, stressed again "the great importance of free press, radio and television", and considered the abolition of any censorship as "the most significant element of our democratization process."[55]

It is doubtful that the information being published was in itself sufficient to cause these leaders to withdraw their support for free mass media. From the remarks mentioned above it might be supposed that the influence of information on public opinion, and consequently the emergence of undesirable pressures upon policy and decision-making from below, were the main reasons for establishing measures against a free press, radio and television. In what direction these pressures went was pointed out briefly in the previous chapter. To emphasize the point again, it would not be an exaggeration to say that this trend was in the direction of re-establishing a pluralistic system. Golan says that by May the leadership was clearly nervous about the rising demands and tendencies toward pluralism.[56] On

June 27 Rude Pravo revealed that "90 per cent of non-Party members queried preferred a multi- to a one-party system, as did 55.5 per cent of party members interviewed."[57]

In conclusion it can be said that there was at least a link between information flowing through the channels of communication and the opinions of liberal members of the leadership. It seems that ideas about freedom of expression, control of power, functions of social organizations and interest groups, and ideology, were ones that particularly influenced the thinking of some members, at least for a certain period of time. From the end of May on, other aspects, particularly pressures from the Soviet leadership, began to play a significant role in altering the attitudes of the CP leaders to domestic developments, especially freedom of expression. In other words, more precautions began to appear in the speeches of these politicians regarding the acceptance of unorthodox ideas, and at the same time they expressed more criticism against the publication of certain kinds of information and opinions, criticism of the CP in the past, freedom for other political parties, changes in foreign relations orientation, etc.

Since the intellectuals' suggestions for solving problems were the result of gradual work which had lasted for years, and this process actually culminated in 1968, it can be argued that the social conditions which influenced the thoughts of the intellectuals had the same influence on opinions of the liberal members of the leadership. However, an attempt was made in the beginning of this chapter to point out that the premises of professional politicians on which they built their views regarding the solution of problems in society were different from those of "progressive" intellectuals. And since the political leaders, unlike these intellectuals, were involved in practical policy and decision-making under different conditions than those in 1968, it is likely that the majority of them were not in the vanguard of those who questioned the social, political and economic conditions and problems in the country. It is probable that the majority of the political leaders (possibly with the exception of Cisar and Mlynar) relied completely on analyses and conclusions of experts whose information was used in order to formulate their own opinions.

It is legitimate to ask why some members were more open to unorthodox ways for solving social problems than others. In other words, why were some members more influenced by the content of the channels of communication than others? It is not easy to account for this; however, it seems that beyond the personality of these members (flexibility of thought, openness to new ideas), their previous experience could have played a role. For example, length of involvement of these members in high Party posts may be a factor. The average length of service of liberals in the Central Committee was 5 years, while the average length of conservatives was 6.4 years. The average length of time for liberals in the Presidium or Secretariat was 1.1 years, and for conservatives, 1.9 years.[58]

Probably, some kind of self-interest played a certain role in the attitudes of conservative members. It appears that the longer the continuous period of involvement in higher Party functions, the greater the possibility that these members would be involved in decision-making in more "Dogmatic" periods of CP rule, and also that any political changes which would disrupt the continuity of Party functions and roles in society would be threatening to them. This hypothesis could also be supported by the fact that conservatives often expressed some criticism of their past mistakes in their earlier speeches.

It seems that the case of the liberalization movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968 is a rare example of the involvement of intellectuals in policy-making on the national level through the channels of communication, and also a rare example of their ability to influence the policy-making of the leadership. This conclusion is in contradiction to Jancar's evaluation of the role of intellectuals in the liberalization movement. She states that "the intellectuals remained on the fringe of the political participation. Their failure to penetrate decisively into the top echelons of the Party demonstrates their relative weakness as an organized political force."[59] This view of "political participation" realized only through decision-making bodies on the highest level, is rather narrow. If one views "political participation" in broader terms (related to the input side of the policy-making), as concerned with political development, expression of opinions, and efforts to influence political decision-making on the highest level, then the effects of intellectuals' communication with the population and the leadership were considerable. "Pressures from below" can be mainly linked to the latent political tendencies existing in the country already before 1968, and to the ideas of intellectuals who were articulating these tendencies as well as illuminating existing problems and making various suggestions about how to solve them.

In other words, besides the "direct communication" between the unorthodox ideas of politically prominent intellectuals and opinions of some members of the leadership, there was a significant "indirect link" between these unorthodox ideas and policy-making of the leadership. The "open" channels of political communication were a means through which the population was getting a range of information very rapidly, and because of this it could orient itself in a relatively short period of time to become a source of considerable pressure upon the leadership.

In sum, the channels of communication, being open for information from various sources, were transmitting this information to all segments of the population, including the leadership. Besides this intensive "informing" function, it can be said that relevant political information flowing through the channels of communication had a very strong "motivating" function, within the population as well as among the leadership.

FOOTNOTES

[1] F. B. Barnard, "Between Opposition and Political Opposition: The Search for Competitive Politics in Czechoslovakia", Canadian Journal of Political Science, V (December, 1972), pp. 533-552.

[2] For example, writer L. Vaculik was excluded from the CP. A member of the Central Committee of the CP at that time, J. Smrkovsky, later described this situation in terms of "pushing the Central Committee toward an administrative solution by the Presidium of the dispute with the writers." MY 68, V (April, 1968), pp. 5-8.

[3] B. W. Jancar, Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power (New York: Praeger Publications, 1971), p.

[4] J. Spacek, Rude Pravo, April 16, 1968, and J. Smrkovsky, Zivot Strany, (No. 10, May, 1968).

[5] Rude Pravo, February 13, 1968.

[6] Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 607-627.

[7] Rude Pravo, March 14, 1968.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Rude Pravo, March 26, 1968.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 607-627.

[12] Rude Pravo, April 4, 1968.

[13] Rude Pravo, March 22, 1968.

[14] Rude Pravo, April 25, 1968.

[15] Rude Pravo, June 5, 1968.

[16] B. Simon, Rude Pravo, June 6, 1968, and J. Spacek, Rude Pravo, March 16, 1968.

[17] Rude Pravo, March 16, 1968.

[18] Rude Pravo, June 6, 1968.

[19] C. Cisar, Rude Pravo, April 4, 1968, O. Cernik, Rude Pravo, July 14, 1968, A. Dubcek, Rude Pravo, July 1, 1968, V. Slavik, Zivot Strany, (No. 12, June 1968),

J. Smrkovsky, MY 68, V (April, 1968), B. Simon, Rude Pravo June 6, 1968, and J. Spacek, Rude Pravo, March 16, 1968.

[20] Z Mlynar, Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 607-627.

[21] F. Kriegel, Rude Pravo, June 19, 1968.

[22] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, pp. 203-204.

[23] Z. Mlynar, Rude Pravo, February 3, 1968.

[24] J. Smrkovsky, MY 68, V (April, 1968).

[25] F. Kriegel, Rude Pravo, February 3, 1968.

[26] A. Dubcek, Rude Pravo, April 24, 1968.

[27] C. Cisar, Rude Pravo, May 7, 1968. A. Dubcek, Rude Pravo, April 21, 1968, Z. Mlynar, Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 607-627, S. Sadovsky, Rude Pravo, April 17, 1968, V. Slavik, Zivot Strany, (No. 12, June, 1968), pp. 5-8. J. Smrkovsky, Rude Pravo, April 19, 1968, J. Spacek, Zivot Strany, (No. 16, August, 1968), pp. 51-53.

[28] C. Cisar, Rude Pravo, April 3, 1968, A. Dubcek, Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 531-538, F. Kriegel, Rude Pravo, June 19, 1968, S. Sadovsky, Rude Pravo, April 17, 1968, V. Slavik, Zivot Strany (No. 12, June, 1968), pp. 5-8, J. Spacek, Zivot Strany (No. 16, August, 1968), pp. 51-53.

[29] A. Dubcek, Rude Pravo, May 29, 1968, S. Sadovsky, Rude Pravo, June 4, 1968, J. Smrkovsky, Rude Pravo, May 19, 1968.

[30] E. Rigo, Rude Pravo, June 20, 1968.

[31] D. Kolder, Rude Pravo, June 22, 1968, and J. Lenart, Rude Pravo, June 17, 1968.

[32] J. Smrkovsky, Rude Pravo, April 4, 1968, C. Cisar, Rude Pravo, April 4, 1968, F. Kriegel, Rude Pravo, June 9, 1968.

[33] Z. Mlynar, Nova Mysl, XII (May, 1968), pp. 607-627, S. Sadovsky, Rude Pravo, June 4, 1968, O. Volenik, Rude Pravo, April 18, 1968.

[34] Rude Pravo, April 13, 1968.

[35] C. Cisar, Rude Pravo, May 6, 1968, A. Dubcek, Rude Pravo, April 25, 1968, Z Mlynar, Rude Pravo, June 6, 1968, J. Spacek, Rude Pravo, April 11, 1968.

[36] Pal Feher, "Conversation with C. Cisar", *Elet es Irodalom*, (Budapest), May 4, 1968. Quoted from G. Golan, *The Czeckoslovak Reform Movement* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 200.

[37] *Rude Pravo*, April 10, 1968.

[38] A. Dubcek, *Rude Pravo*, June 13, 1968, O. Cernik, *Rude Pravo*, July 14, 1968, J. Smrkovsky, *Rude Pravo*, July 22, 1968.

[39] *Rude Pravo*, July 22, 1968.

[40] V. Bilak, *Rude Pravo*, April 10, 1968, and E. Rigo, *Rude Pravo*, June 6, 1968.

[41] V. Bilak, *Rude Pravo*, April 4, 1968, and *Rude Pravo*, June 5, 1968, D. Kapek, *Rude Pravo*, June 7, 1968, [illegible]. Barbirek, *Rude Pravo*, June 7, 1968, O. Svestka, *Rude Prayo*, June 19, 1968.

[42] E. Rigo, *Rude Pravo*, June 6, 1968.

[43] *Rude Pravo*, March 2, 1968.

[44] J. Spacek, *Rude Pravo*, April 11, 1968.

[45] *Rude Pravo*, April 18, 1968.

[46] O. Cernik, *Rude Pravo*, June 2, 1968, A. Dubcek, *Rude Pravo*, May 29, 1968, J. Smrkovsky, *Zivot Strany*, (No. 10, May, 1968), pp. 16-19.

[47] *Rude Pravo*, May 30, 1968.

[48] *Praca*, April 20, 1968.

[49] *Rude Pravo*, May 23, 1968.

[50] *Pravda* (Bratislava), June 4, 1968. Quoted from Golan, *The Czeckoslovak*, p. 296.

[51] *Rude Pravo*, June 7, 1968.

[52] *Ibid*.

[53] *Ibid*.

[54] *Rude Pravo*, June 6, 1968.

[55] *Rude Pravo*, August 1, 1968.

[56] Golan, *The Czechoslovak*, p. 307.

[57] Rude Pravo, June 27, 1968.

[58] Rude Pravo, April 6, 1968. The figures of the length in high party posts for individual members taken frombiographies of the members of the Presidium and the Secretariat.

[59] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, p. 200.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

An attempt was made in this work to show the channels of political communication as one of the most significant factors relevant to the original question, "What were the most important factors contributing to changes in the social and political structure in Czechoslovakia in such a short period of time?" Rapidly increased political participation of citizens and "benevolence" of the leadership to this participation were found to play the most important role in contributing to these changes. However, it is necessary to view both these factors in relation to the broader sequence of events, which could be characterized as a set of social, political and economic conditions which created a basis for the 1968 political development. These conditions first brought about freer political communication, and this led to increased political participation, resulting in strong pressures upon the leadership for the establishment of a pluralistic political system.

The conditions which prepared the ground for the liberal movement in 1968 were particularly a result of developments in the 1960's. The socio-economic crisis in the 1960's increased the interest of the leadership in improving the situation, especially the economic one.

But because of the close ties between the economic and political system, it was impossible to improve the economic system without making substantial political concessions. However, this situation appeared insoluble under the leadership of Novotny, who opposed realization of any economic reforms which would bring political changes as well. The conflict between popular dissatisfaction, which included many members of the ruling elite as well, and the rigidity of Novotny's leadership resulted in the replacement of some of the most conservative members of the leadership by others who were more in favour of economic reforms as well as making some political concessions to public demands. The unstable position of the new "liberal" members of the leadership, at a time when many "conservatives" still held important posts, urged them to seek greater popular support than would have probably been the case otherwise. In other words, since it was impossible to seek greater stability of the new leadership through rapid improvements in economic efficiency (which has always been held as the most important criterion for establishing the legitimacy of a socialist government), for the first time since 1948 it was sought through popular support.

But popular support under existing conditions could be achieved only on the basis of much greater responsiveness to popular demands and interests. To become more responsive to these popular demands and interests meant to know what they were, and it meant the "allowance" of their free expression. To allow their free expression meant to "allow" the opening of channels of communication for that expression. In short, economic and political crises, inability of the old leadership to deal with these crises, and the necessity of liberal members of the leadership having to seek popular support to maintain their position against conservatives. These were the factors which contributed to the creation of conditions for opening the channels of communication, for "free exchange of information".

Free exchange of information and opinions created a basic condition for rapid crystallization of political views, attitudes and demands of the population, including the members of the leadership. Information, opinions and ideas, coming from various sources (domestic as well as foreign) enabled people to illuminate many existing political and social problems and increased a general awareness of their own real interests as individuals in society, as well as their awareness of the interests of the country as a whole.

The rapidity with which this process proceeded was dependent on another set of factors, the most important of which are considered to be: the existence of politically involved intellectuals, who were searching for the "truth" at least for a decade, experiences with a democratic political system, and a latently existing participatory political culture of the population.

Thus, it seems that the process of intensified political communication, which resulted in breaking down the authoritarian political structure, was conditioned by previous political experiences and the participatory orientation of the population. But it should be emphasized that certain preconditions are necessary in order for intensified political communication to result in popular pressures for the gradual change over from an authoritarian political system to a plualistic one.

The preconditions for political change in Czechoslovakia in 1968 might be summarized as follows:

1. Economic crisis and Novotny's inflexibility might be considered as the main reason for replacement of the most conservative members of the leadership by more liberal ones.

2. The unstable position of the liberal members of the leadership might be considered as the major reason for seeking popular support.

3. Popular support was achievable only through greater responsiveness of the leadership to demands and interests of the population.

4. Awareness of popular demands and interests was dependent on the possibility of expressing them freely, i.e., on opening channels of communication for their free expression.

5. The presence of politically involved intellectuals, who had access to various sources of information as well as to channels of communication, seems to be the most important condition for rapid and intensive exchange of politically relevant information and opinions.

6. Intensive exchange of politically relevant information and opinions appears to be a basic condition for the illumination of social and political problems, as well as for clarification of the interests of people and the nation as a whole.

7. Clarification of popular and national interests and the possibility of expressing them freely enabled development of strong popular pressures (usually through new as well as old social and interest organizations) upon the leadership to establish a more democratic system.

8. Popular political activities, primarily interest groupings, functioned as a means for breaking down the authoritarian political structure and creating a structure similar to that of pluralistic political systems.

9. This process of breaking down the authoritarian political structure and the rapid appearance of a differentiated one, seems to be dependent to a very high degree on previous experiences with a democratic political system, and on a latently surviving participatory political culture among the population.

A few links between certain aspects of the liberal development in Czechoslovakia in 1968, are suggested in this conclusion as the most significant:

1. Opening the channels of communication, and increasing the quantity and variety of information flowing through them, decreases the possibility to manipulate people and increases their political participation.

2. Intensified political participation of the population (reflected mainly in rapid growth of social, political and interest organizations generally) can function as a force for breaking down the authoritarian political structure.

3. The aims of political activity of the population seemed to be dependent to a high degree on previous political experiences.

4. Increased political communication among the population, including the leadership, seemed to influence the political opinions and attitudes of some members of the leadership in the sense that they gradually accepted more liberal views and developed more responsiveness to pressure coming from below.

5. Greater openness to liberal ideas and political change seemed to be partially dependent on the degree of information, knowledge and education generally.

It should be stressed once more that these generalizations are made on the basis of a "case study"--a particular set of conditions and phenomena in one country--and any attempt to apply them to other cases should be made only with great caution. These generalizations were made on the basis of an investigation of the political situation between January and August of 1968, and any speculations about the possibilities of development in the country, if liberalization had not been forcibly stopped by the armies of the USSR and other members of the Warsaw Pact, have been left out intentionally. The prevailing political trend in the country in the period discussed was clear enough, and to try to point out all possible factors in the "game" under the condition of a continuation of liberalization would have gone beyond the aims of this study.

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